

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



October 2014

Vol. 119, No. 10

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THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON

Pranayama and Brahmacharya

The first effect of this practice is perceived in the change of expression of one's face; harsh lines disappear; with calm thought calmness comes over the face. Next comes beautiful voice. I never saw a Yogi with a croaking voice. Just think of "Om," and you can practise even while you are sitting at your work. Some day, if you practise hard, the kundalini will be aroused. For those who practise once or twice a day, just a little calmness of the body and mind will come, and beautiful voice; only for those who can go on further with it will Kundalini be aroused, and the whole of nature will begin to change, and the book of knowledge will open. No more will you need to go to books for knowledge; your own mind will have become your book, containing infinite knowledge.

The Yogis claim that of all the energies that are in the human body the highest is what they call "Ojas". Now this Ojas is stored up in the brain, and the more Ojas is in a man's head, the more powerful he is, the more intellectual, the more spiritually strong. One man may speak beautiful language and beautiful thoughts, but they, do not impress people; another man speaks neither beautiful language nor beautiful thoughts, yet his words charm. Every movement of his is powerful. That is the power of Ojas.



Now in every man there is more or less of this Ojas stored up. All the forces that are working in the body in their highest become Ojas. You must remember that it is only a question of transformation. The Yogis say that that part of the human energy which is expressed as sex energy, in sexual thought, when checked and controlled, easily becomes changed into Ojas, and as the Muladhara guides these, the Yogi pays particular attention to that centre. He tries to take up all his sexual energy and convert it into Ojas. It is only the chaste man or woman who can make the Ojas rise and store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. A man feels that if he is unchaste, spirituality goes away, he loses mental vigour and moral stamina. That is why in all the religious orders in the world which have produced spiritual giants you will always find absolute chastity insisted upon.

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*,
(Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2013), 1.185-88.

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Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

The Boat of Knowledge

October 2014
Vol. 119, No. 10

Acharya Shankara

विज्ञान-नौका

निषेधे कृते नेतिनेतीति वाक्यैः समाधिस्थितानां यदाभाति पूर्णम् ।
अवस्थात्रयातीतमद्वैतमेकं परं ब्रह्म नित्यं तदेवाहमस्मि ॥ ५ ॥

*Nishedhe krite neti-neti-iti vakyaih
samadhi-sthitānam yadabhati purnam*

*Avastha-trayaatitam advaitam ekam
param brahma nityam tadevahasmi* (5)

That which is revealed completely to one established in samadhi, by negation through statements like 'not this', 'not this', [that which] is beyond the three states [of consciousness], the one non-dual, I am indeed that supreme eternal Brahman.

यदानन्दलेशैः समानन्दि विश्वं यदाभाति सत्त्वे सदाभाति सर्वम् ।
यदालोचिते हेयमन्यत्समस्तं परं ब्रह्म नित्यं तदेवाहमस्मि ॥ ६ ॥

*Yadananda-leshaih samanandi vishvam
yadabhati sattve sadabhati sarvam*

*Yadalochite heyamanyat-samastam
param brahma nityam tadevahasmi* (6)

Even by a little of which bliss the entire universe rejoices, in which luminous existence all is revealed always, contemplating on which, everything else becomes insignificant, I am indeed that supreme eternal Brahman.

THIS MONTH

THE IDEA OF DUTY is generally unpleasant and duty is considered to be a burden by many. This is one of the reasons why we tend to neglect our duties. ***Svadharma, One's Duty*** tells us what duty is and warns us of the consequences of not maintaining a right attitude towards it. Forgetfulness or neglect of duty causes irreparable harm to society and reminds us of the very characteristic of forgetting which is closely connected with **Memory**. Swami Satyamayananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Kanpur, takes us on a tour to unravel the secrets behind the mechanism of human memory. He tries to analyse the causes for the failure of memory by referring to some recent developments in science.

The process of translation is daunting and much could be lost in it. Words of one language translate into that of another. The idiom of the original language could be lost in the translation. It is because of its complexity that translation studies has developed into a major academic discipline. The intricacies of translation are dealt with in ***Translating the Word*** by Medha Bhattacharyya, assistant professor of English, Bengal Institute of Technology, Kolkata.

Evolution has been viewed differently by various scholars. The major division of thoughts on evolution appears to be between those who follow Darwin and those who do not. In ***Evolution: Darwin, Sufism, and Sri Aurobindo***, Dr K V Raghupathi, Senior Assistant Professor of English, Central University of Tamil Nadu, Thiruvavur, brings out the differences between

the evolution theories of Darwin, Sufism, and Sri Aurobindo. He highlights the fallacies of Darwinism and supports the more integral perspective of the mystical traditions symbolized by Sufism and Sri Aurobindo. The mystical in religion has always been an intriguing subject. Mysticism is a means of redemption. Redemption is explored by Joe E Barnhart, former Professor of Philosophy and Religion Studies at the University of North Texas and former President of the American Academy of Religion, Southwest division, in the second instalment of ***Religious Dimensions of Karl Popper's Philosophy***.

Åke Sander, Professor of Psychology and Sociology of Religion, Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg, discusses the possibility of a right religion in the final instalment of ***Perceiving Other Religions***. This paper is based on a conference lecture delivered by him at the Banaras Hindu University in 2012.

Somenath Mukherjee, Centre for Indological Studies and Research, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata describes the help given to Swami Vivekananda by Franklin Sanborn in the final instalment of ***Franklin B Sanborn: A Reassessment***.

External circumstances alone cannot lift our minds to a higher plane. We need to do spiritual practices to keep our minds on a higher plane as instructed by Swami Adbhutananda in the concluding part of ***Eternal Words***. The swami's words are translated from *Sat Katha* published by Udbodhan Office, Kolkata.

Svadharma, One's Duty

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO in life? What is my duty? What is my way and what is not? These questions are integral to our existence. We become what we do. What we do is our identity. If you are a police officer, it is not only because of a badge and an ID but because you protect people. That is your duty. You do not become a teacher by just getting a job but by your commitment to teaching. Our actions define us and so, it is vital that we know what our actions should be. *Svadharma* or one's duty has been a guiding principle of human society. However, there seems to be some confusion about the concept, particularly in recent times, owing to not understanding the Indian *varnashrama* system. Such confusion mainly centres around how to decide on one's duty.

Svadharma is what one professes to do. If one vows to teach, then teaching is *svadharma*. If one is a medical doctor, treating patients is *svadharma*. In the context of this word, *sva* means one's own and *dharma* means that which one upholds. How does one know what one's duty is? It is common to arrive at an understanding of one's duty from the family and society one is born into, and the consequent upbringing one receives. This gives us an idea of what is correct, proper, and acceptable. A husband who is brought up in India might consider it his duty to guard the interests of his wife almost to the extent of apparently controlling her. Whereas a husband who is brought up in Europe might consider that taking care of his wife's necessities and allowing her to make decisions independently and giving her space would

be the best things to do. Further, the idea of duty differs greatly depending on our religious backgrounds. Duty is decidedly a subjective matter. However, there are some moral imperatives that are universal, for example, telling the truth, not hurting others, not stealing, and loving everyone.

Birth and society do influence our idea of duty. But what if someone thinks that she or he was born into the wrong family and surroundings? What if someone feels stifled by the beliefs and customs of the place where one was brought up? Then a person develops one's own idea of duty based on the understanding of oneself and the world. A doctor's daughter need not be a doctor. A lawyer's daughter need not be a lawyer. A priest's daughter need not be a priest. This means that in the final analysis, duty is what one vows to do. It could be based on birth, family, and society, or it could be a choice away from the cultural roots of the society where one was brought up. Once one decides and vows to do something, after proper thinking and consulting traditional wisdom, one should stick to that and it is this sense of holding on to one's responsibilities taken upon by one, which is generally called 'duty'.

Duty is not just something we ought to do, but it is the indicator of our personalities. It is just like the insignia of an establishment, which identifies and makes a statement of the institution's mission. We are known by what we profess to do. No matter how great one may consider one's duty to be, it could be seen in a totally different light by others. We have to be liberal enough to understand and accept different ideas


of duty. I may not like what someone calls one's duty, but I have to accept it as a possible duty of a person. Differences could arise out of quite insignificant practices. Take for instance, the habit of carrying pens in one's shirt pocket. Some cultures consider it the mark of a learned person while others ridicule this as a sign of pomposity. Depending on the culture one is born into, a person may or may not carry pens in one's shirt pocket, all the while thinking that she or he is making a point by this small action. Our ideas of duty are just like this. We hold on to some convictions, which may not be so important after all. But it is definitely a sign of the determination of our personalities whether we hold on to what we believe in or shed our convictions at the slightest pretext.

History is replete with instances of people who deviated from the sense of duty they were brought up with. They took on new and different responsibilities, shouldered them well, and found their deserved places in history. History also abounds with examples of people who marred their lives and the lives of their nations by not performing what they professed. If a ruler, who is supposed to take care of the subjects, does not do so, there may be an uprising. If a teacher, who is supposed to impart knowledge to the pupil, does not do so, there may be a defection by the student. The condition of an individual, a family, a society, and a nation can be made or marred by performing or neglecting one's duties.

It is common to hear people grumble at the talk of duty because duty is for most, something one has to do, whether one likes it or not. Such an idea of duty is binding. A nurse, who attends to a patient because she has to do it, is unlikely to provide the same comfort as a mother who takes care of her child because she loves to do so. Love makes duty sweet. It makes bearing pain pleasurable. If a person takes up a responsibility, a cause, a person, or an ideal and gives everything

for that, such a cause, person, or ideal becomes both a duty as well as an object of love. A soldier who loves one's country will fight to the death not because of the compensation his family will get but because of the protection he can give to his country. That is the power of love.

True love does not come of selfishness. Since one's duty cannot be properly done without love, it cannot be properly done without being unselfish. Duty done for duty's sake, work done for work's sake, without any motive, without any kind of expectation, would lead us to our higher self. By sacrificing our needs for some higher purpose, we stress on our higher nature by denying the lower nature. Across all species, a mother is the most unselfish. She has no thought other than the well-being of her children. Even when she is at a distance, a mother's heart constantly prays for her children. That is a prayer no God can ignore. That is why motherhood is worshipped by believers and non-believers alike.

How wonderful the world would be if every person does one's duty without any expectation, without bothering about the duties of others, without judging others? How nice and peaceful would that world be where duty would be just a synonym of love? If a cook has to cook, let her cook, why grumble? Has change in duties brought any peace to anyone? Once we take up a responsibility, we have to give up our entire being to that task. We have to work with a smile, not a smirk. Work done in such a spirit would ennoble and enlighten us. We can conquer seemingly insurmountable obstacles with such a never-say-die attitude. We would work till our last breath. So, let us find our work and give our entire breath to it. Let us find our own way and see the light through it. Let us take the burden of iron and turn it into sweet cotton candy. Let our indomitable wills and ever-expanding hearts make of us personalities who do not just promise but also deliver. 

Memory

Swami Satyamayananda

WHAT PERSONALITY REALLY IS has tantalized, annoyed, stimulated, and eluded the understanding of most people for ages. It is not that people have not strived for answers; they have been aplenty in the past and today various modern disciplines are forcefully presenting their findings. Yet, this collective wisdom has not really satisfied the human soul. It is like approaching answers only to find them receding like the horizon, the more one goes towards them. This has merely served to fuel this quest with urgency, a quest compounded by the difficulty that an intellectual understanding is only an insignificant part of the journey of self-discovery. The greater part consists in its actualization. Otherwise, it will be like a person who knows all about food, where it is obtained, how it is chewed and digested, but still goes hungry because no effort is made to procure food and eat it.

The Mystery of Personality

A personality comprises physical, emotional, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions. These dimensions interact constantly in order to bring out the unique characteristics of an individual. No doubt one needs to be lion-hearted to truly unravel and conquer the mystery that enshrouds every personality. The reason is simple: the journey of self-discovery is an internal journey. Here the terrain becomes inexorably exacting and frightening at times, for part of this demanding terrain is the riddle of how memory is created, stored, recalled, increased, and destroyed. From another standpoint it can be said that memory itself is the

basis of the personality; for it is noticed that as memory is lost, so is a personality correspondingly seen to change, fragment, and disintegrate. The causes for this can be many, some of them are organic like Alzheimer's disease, toxic like drugs and alcohol, psychological like stress and hysterical amnesia, pathological like tumours, lesions, and finally, gradual like dementia. The Vedic sages understood the importance of memory for the well-being of the person. We find in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, 'Even if many people who do not have memory sit together, surely they will not hear, think of and know anyone. Should they indeed have memory, then they would hear, thereafter they would think, then they would know. Through memory one recognizes one's son, through memory the animals.'¹ In other words, the loss of memory will reduce a person to a zombie, which cannot be called a personality anymore.

In the rush to look at the phenomena of memory, we ought not to forget Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda, all paragons of *shrutidhara*, one who can remember anything by hearing it just once. We also need to scrutinize the great mantra in the *Isha Upanishad*, 'Om! O my mind, remember all that has been done, remember all that has been done,'² to learn what form of memory this dying person is instructing his mind to remember. Clearly, this memory must have its uses even after death. Then, the extraordinary saying of Arjuna near the end of the Bhagavadgita, 'My delusion is gone. I have regained my memory through your grace'³ takes memory to its classic heights, which need to be scaled.

Most of the traditional religionists and scientists cannot see eye to eye without sometimes snarling, snapping, sneering, and smiling derisively at each other. To avoid this constant unpleasantness and stress both parties decide to withdraw and maintain a distance where their gaze doesn't have to fall even on the whites of their antagonist's eyes. But instead of being quiet, the deep rift coupled with misunderstandings makes them throw shadows at each other now and then. Now, instead of teasingly sweeping each other's ivory towers with their religious and scientific searchlights, the need to train them steadily on truth is building up. When both religion and science acknowledge that truth is what they are looking for, it would be better for both to combine their collective talents and energies than to waste them superfluously. Religion and science also need to stand up to each other's scrutiny. This will be a bridge of understanding for humanity. Of course, there are many enlightened men and women on both sides, who see things in a unitary fashion. This is due to the awareness of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life and phenomena, which is inexorably making tremendous impact in all fields of human endeavour.

It is hoped that this article will throw some light on the delicate, deep, and subtle realms of human personality in order to discover its secrets. It attempts to look at human memory in a holistic way. 'All India's literature, indeed, the entire Indian civilization of the vast centuries that make up the Mnemonic Period was preserved by the safeguards of memory and the strictest intellectual discipline.'⁴

Memory—The Basis of India's Spiritual and Cultural Life

The Hindu scriptures comprise of Shruti, what is heard—the Vedas; Smriti, what is remembered, Puranas—numerous mythological and epic

literature; *Sutras*, aphorisms—philosophy put in mnemonic form including law books; Darshana, to see—philosophical commentaries, treatises, and the tantras. These scriptures were memorized and so did not decay with time and could not be destroyed by the sword of foreign conquerors. Great minds with their tremendous retention not only kept the scriptures alive but also preserved religious culture and arts through thousands of years. This process commenced with the Rig Veda, which is the oldest extant human composition. A section of that ancient Indian society was actively mobilized to memorize and transmit the sacred mantras to successive generations. When writing came into vogue, it was not trusted as a means of transmission of this knowledge but was used only to promote memorization. This was one of the unique features of Indian civilization. This system of transmission of knowledge had its drawbacks. Natural calamities and contagious diseases sometimes suddenly and tragically wiped out entire villages and clans, and with them disappeared parts of the Vedas kept in their protection. However, the belief that God creates the universe from the Vedas, which are co-existent and co-eternal with him, demanded diligence and veneration in preserving these scriptures. Another belief that sacred mantras have the power to transform consciousness also helped eliminate carelessness. Even today one can find many people in India who can recite lengthy passages from the Vedas or the Puranas. Buddhism and Jainism, two offshoots of Vedic religion, also followed this method of preserving the scriptures. Buddhism heavily emphasized memorizing long passages and still does so.

It is common to draw parallels between the workings of the computer and the human brain. Many words are increasingly used to mean things associated both with the computer and the human brain. There have been giant leaps in artificial intelligence, AI. AI is being increasingly

employed in numerous fields such as perception, language, and decision-making. AI systems can 'think' and perform a variety of functions. They can effectively run and manage simple to complex operations in fields ranging from medicine to the military. AI has advanced with developments in neurology, electronics, and biology. This has opened a great field with tremendous potential and has replaced human intervention in many fields that are hazardous and strenuous, and which require extreme care and vigilance.

Today's developed and developing nations are burgeoning with information at an unprecedented pace. This has become possible because man has learnt to electronically store, process, quickly retrieve, and transmit information. The cultivation and accumulation of diverse kinds of information has far exceeded any human capacity for memorization, even in a single discipline. The race is on, amongst scientists from various disciplines, to make the chip more and more micro, at the same time enabling it to accommodate more megabytes of information. A giant leap has been made towards nanotechnology, which can be employed in almost every field.

On the one hand man seems to be able to conquer Nature with integrated circuits, electronic chips, and nanotechnology; on the other, the human capacity for storing data in the brain is apparently diminishing alarmingly. As the capacity to memorize is seen to diminish, a steep rise in mental health problems is noticed. Of course,

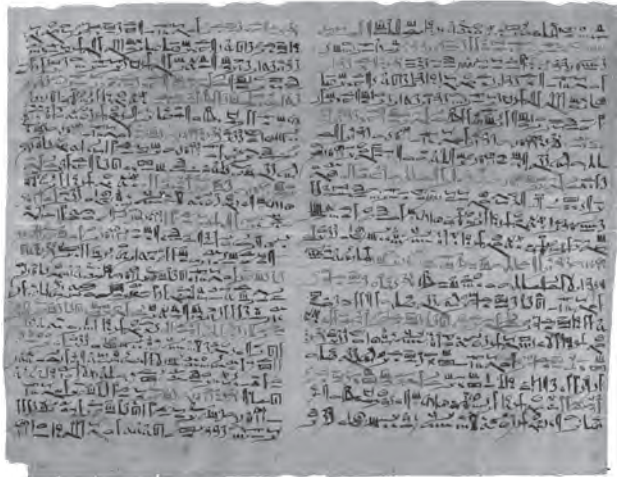
there are many reasons for this; memory could be one of them. A computer is called powerful when it can process numbers and data quickly. A person is considered powerful when she or he has a higher ability to memorize and recall things. Intelligence depends on two basic abilities: perception and reasoning. Computers can function admirably fast because their computing capacity can be increased as one pleases. But ordinarily computers can function only in a limited paradigm while human intelligence appears to have no limits. Perception in living beings is unique; in humans this uniqueness is taken to its very heights where ordinary lan-

guage fails to express its intricacy. Computers might never replicate all the processes of the human brain, even with sophisticated digital cameras and sensors. However, both the human brain and the computer can crash. One such crashing of the human brain is called amnesia. Paradoxically, amnesia is studied to under-

stand better the processes of memory. Crashed computers head for the junkyard but a brain has tremendous resilience and might recover. If it cannot, it leads the personality to dark depths.

Amnesia

Amnesia is speculated as being a product of evolution. *Homo sapiens* in their long evolutionary journey have shed through natural selection, many physical traits after their utility was exhausted. The necessity of lugging around excess baggage was unnecessary and illogical.



*Edwin Smith Egyptian Papyrus c. 1600 BC
containing first written record of the human brain*

Evolutionarily speaking, Homo sapiens are relatively recent on the world scene but in such a short period, evolution has built complex structures of matter pertaining to bodies and brains. A brain, merely 2% of the body weight, consumes 20% of the body's total oxygen needs, proving its relative importance. We do not know the extent of evolution's role in making room for new memories by removing older ones, but it is logical to assume that such removal of older memories helps in evolution. Ordinarily, it is a common experience to forget the name of a newly introduced person or phone number after some time. But we remember something if there is a utility. Thus utility is one of the main criteria of remembering or forgetting. The human mind, however, does fail to remember certain experiences, for instance, an intense emotional experience. This kind of involuntary amnesia is a psychological defence mechanism. Intense emotional experiences would otherwise interfere with other thoughts by casting their shadows on them, upsetting normal life. These disturbing experiences can be revived. It is also found that these very conveniently forgotten experiences remain as unconscious impulses, silently leaching out their poison in the subsoil of the psyche.

One theory posits 'interference' as the reason for amnesia. A new impression interferes with pre-existing ones. In such cases forgetting is likely but this explanation appears too simplistic, as the brain is highly complex. Another theory ascribes amnesia to 'retrieval system failure'. Neurology says that amnesia occurs due to lesions as a result of some diseases and also when the larger neurons shrink and the smaller ones too tend to disintegrate with age. Moreover, it is found that memory falters and fails in an unstimulating and insipid environment because no new neural connections are being forged. Perhaps the most puzzling kind of amnesia

occurs when personal memories are forgotten while non-personal memories like language are remembered. Other causes for amnesia are alcoholism, drug abuse, low levels of oxygen and testosterone, and even improper application of general anaesthesia. As early as 1882, T A Ribot in *Diseases of Memory* endeavoured to account memory loss as a symptom of progressive brain damage. The Russian researcher Sergey Korsakoff was the first to recognize that amnesia need not necessarily be associated with brain damage or dementia. Korsakoff's Syndrome is a type of amnesia, which could be caused by alcoholism and malnutrition. Scales of intelligence can only infer what is forgotten. Some experiences are selectively forgotten, others preceding a trauma, while some after a trauma. Trauma can be physical or emotional in nature. All this only proves how tenuous is memory on which our whole life depends.

We see that much of life's experiences are forgotten. We remember only some intense happy and unhappy experiences, the rest have flowed away like water under a bridge. Nobody regrets or is too upset over these losses. Somehow it all seems unimportant in the long run. Sri Ramakrishna says: 'The man of worldly nature suffers so much sorrow and affliction but he forgets it all in a few days and begins life over again. Suppose a man has lost his wife or she has turned unfaithful. Lo! He marries again. Or take the instance of a mother, her son dies and she suffers bitter grief but after a few days she forgets all about it.'⁵

Importance of Remembrance in Society

It is not rare to find in the world, members of both primitive and modern cultures believing themselves to be the chosen people or descendants of primeval divine or semi-divine ancestors with a special mission. What is important

here is that these beliefs invariably to be the chosen mould their respective socio-political structures. Rituals, mythology, and art also reflect and reinforce these beliefs, which receive a fresh impetus whenever such people congregate for religious or social functions. Before we can snicker at this mumbo jumbo, a little introspection shall show that man is not averse to encouraging remembrance of social history.

Mankind seems to have a built-in penchant for recording its times and lives, even from the earliest ages. Scribblings, symbols, and drawings on cave walls can be found all over the world. Societies build memorials, monuments, and statues to commemorate victories, heroes, martyrs, and philanthropists. Nations mourn their losses and sacrifices and also want to remember their glories and fortunes through special occasions. Districts, cities, plazas, parks, mountains, streets, homes, even children and pets are sometimes named after a historical or mythical figure. Discoveries in any field are named after discoverers. Social events are hosted in honour of people who have contributed to human welfare. Holidays are celebrated in the honour of someone's great actions. Family photo albums are zealously maintained. Anthropology, archaeology, palaeontology, and the like get their inspiration by studying man's early life. History is taught in schools to children and then scope is offered for various specializations. Parents and grandparents are fondly remembered when no longer alive. For a Hindu it is imperative to remember the names of her or his ancestors of the preceding fourteen generations. Epitaphs are a rule at the place of interment. Ancestor worship is found everywhere. Folk tales and songs speak of the past. Digital technology has given a boost to storage of images and voices for posterity. Museums and archives are an integral part of

society. We want reminders often while doing anything and reminders are a source of great comfort and security. Of course, evildoers get tormented by their memories. The list can go on and on. A human being, it seems, is enamoured with memory.

All this could be interpreted as seeking one's roots. A human being fears losing memories and consequently losing one's cultural roots. This fear has also spawned a roaring industry in memory enhancing drugs, alternative medicines with exotic names, unbelievable promises, and dismal results. Various books written by experts with high-sounding qualifications appended to their names, guarantee memory increasing methods. A staggering number of entries can be found on memory and related subjects on the Internet. Apart from the fear of being without roots and a misplaced desire for immortality, it is apparent that a lot of time and energy can be saved if we could only remember things at the right time. Memory then is the main component of an enriched personality. From the collective standpoint, remembering things is an integral part of an enriched, continuous social and cultural life.

(To be continued)

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Translating the Word

Medha Bhattacharyya

TRANSLATION HAS EMERGED as a crucial activity in enhancing cultural interaction and has helped in knitting the world together. The sheer variety of languages in the world has made communication difficult. As people of diverse cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, and language groups have to constantly and effectively communicate with each other, translating into other languages has become a necessary criterion to bring about an understanding among people of varied communities by transcending language barriers. This is where translation plays a key role. When a text is incomprehensible to us in its original language, we sometimes translate it into a different language in order to grasp the essence of the source text.

Every aspect of our lives is filled with some sort of translational activity. Whenever we talk to another person, we translate our thoughts into words. Whenever we write, we translate our ideas into words. Particularly in a multilingual country like India, the importance of translation is even greater as it helps to forge a bond of understanding among peoples of diverse cultures and literature of this vast land. So it is essential to translate from a regional source language into English as this facilitates national integration. I mention English as the target language as it has become a part of the Indian identity.

What is Translation?

According to the seventh edition of *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the word 'translation' means 'the process of changing something

that is written or spoken into another language.' What is the process of this transfer? Is the outcome of this transfer as clear as our image in a polished mirror, or is it as hazy as our distorted reflection in a blurred one? In the words of Sukanta Chaudhuri, translation 'must be the encounter of two equipollent forces, the mutual reflection of light that the trained eye alone can recognize and render, not the view through a transparent lens.'¹ It is not transparent simply because it cannot be so. For every sign, the signifier-signified relationship is arbitrary and thus the sign in the source language, when translated into the culture of the target language will also exhibit arbitrariness. So, for every source meaning and source word, the translated meaning and the translated word are bound to be different.

Whenever there is a discourse on translation, it is stressed that the target text becomes the product of not only the information imparted by the source text, but also a site on which various translational theories have interacted.

The next important question translators should ask themselves is: 'Who are we translating for?' After assessing the aim of translating the source text and selecting the target language, the next crucial step is to determine the target readership. By keeping the target reader in mind, the translator is able to devise strategies for translating the text. If it is for an Indian reader, then the reader would be able to decipher the meanings of several culture-specific terms. But for the non-Indian and Indian diaspora readers, notes and glossary must be furnished.

John Dryden, the great English dramatist, poet, and translator of the Restoration period, categorises all translations into three types—*metaphrase*, *paraphrase*, and *imitation*.² He describes *metaphrase* as a word-by-word translation where each and every word, sentence, and paragraph is translated from one language to another ‘word by word, and line by line’ (ibid.). In the *paraphrase* mode of translation, one has to maintain the sense of the source language text in the target language. In the *imitation* mode, the translator deviates from both the word and the sense of the original as is thought proper. The *paraphrase* mode is more widely used as it prioritizes the sense more than the equivalence of language in the exercise of translation.

To elucidate the above-mentioned categorization, let us consider some Bengali texts. Let us look at *Rakta Karabi*, which Rabindranath Tagore himself translated as *Red Oleanders*, which makes use of all the three modes. He left out sections from the original play—he felt that the Western audience for whom he was translating would not be able to understand them—while still conveying the sense of the original. He employed the *metaphrase* mode in the king’s speech—‘*Raja: Kisher samay?*’³ translated as ‘King: Time for what?’⁴

The following speech by the Raja towards the ending of *Rakta Karabi* is an example of the *paraphrase* mode of translation.

‘*Raja: Ta hole kache esho. Sahash ache amake biswas korte? Cholo amar sange. Aj amake tomar sathi koro, Nandini.*’⁵ In the English rendering, *Red Oleanders*, Tagore conveys the sense of the above speech: ‘King: Be brave, Nandini, trust me. Make me your comrade to-day.’⁶

An example of the *imitation* mode is in the translation of the word ‘*sarbonashi*’ which Tagore translates as ‘witch’ in the words of Gokul: ‘*Fande felecho sabaike. Sarbonashi tumi.*’⁷

In *Red Oleanders* these lines are translated as: ‘You’re snaring everybody here. You’re a witch.’⁸ In Bengali the word ‘*sarbonashi*’ is used here as an adjective and literally means causing utter ruin, causing a great harm or danger or calamity. In English the word ‘witch’ is a noun and according to the seventh edition of *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, a witch is ‘1) a woman who is believed to have magic powers, especially to do evil things. In stories, she usually wears a black pointed hat and flies on a broomstick. 2) (*disapproving*) an ugly unpleasant old woman.’ But Nandini does not belong to either of the above-mentioned two categories that describe a witch. So, Tagore drifts both from the original sense and meaning of the word ‘*sarbonashi*’ to make it less cumbersome for his Western readers to understand his ultimate message in *Rakta Karabi*.

One of the important concepts to be discussed in the process of translation is culture specificity. It is quite tricky to find target language equivalents of culture-specific terms or forms in English. In such cases, the translator can offer notes and enter the terms in the glossary as the case may be. This strategy itself is an act of ‘exclusion’. It is the exclusion of space of the source text as against its inclusion in the target text.

In the introduction to *Pather Panchali* translated by T W Clark and Tarapada Mukherji, Clark mentions that ‘the method adopted is deliberately inconsistent. The names of the principal characters, common objects and places are spelt in English in such a way that the reader in saying them can come as close as possible to the Bengali pronunciation.’⁹ So the standard system of transliteration has been abandoned throughout the book. No italicized word has been provided except for the names of magazines and newspapers in the translated version.

The following are some of the examples: Opu, Horihor, Shorbojoya instead of the conventional Apu, Harihar, Sarvajaya. Where an equivalent is not found in English, the names of relations, fruits, and trees were retained in the manner they are pronounced in Bengali as in 'shej-bou' (83), 'Khoka' (334), 'senyakul fruit' (208), 'koromcha fruit' (110), 'akondophul trees' (331). Where the names are not culture specific and have equivalent names in English, the translators have used the English version of it as in 'Kochu and ol and jasmine creepers' (124). In spite of all these strategies adopted by the translators, it is quite surprising as to why the translators chose to transcreate and exclude the *Panchali* form into that of a novel because not only is the deeper spirit of the text lost in translation but also lost is the culture specific form of the original.

In Sukanta Chaudhuri's translation of *Abol Tabol*—which literally means 'nonsense,' or *Ha Ja Ba Ra La*, which means gibberish—the title is translated as *Topsy Turvey Tale* that compliments the sense of the text and enables us to understand a new dimension of translating from a highly culture specific Bengali text into English. According to Chaudhuri:

Nonsense verse might be regarded as the type of writing most difficult to translate, as even appropriate correspondence is out of the question—not only with actual nonsense-words and coinages, but with the exceptionally incongruous mix of culture-specific ingredients. In

fact, however, I found that this avowed impossibility had a liberating effect. Freed from the fiction of equivalence, the mismatch between source and output became a declared factor in the exercise.¹⁰

If the element of nonsense is lost then the whole text is lost. Let us look at the second line from the piece '*Narad! Narad!*'¹¹ from *Abol Tabol* translated as 'War and Peace': '(Ar) *shedin naki ratri jure nak dekechish bishri shure?*'¹² This has been translated as: 'And also that last night at three; You snored completely out of key?'¹³

Some may be surprised as to why 'at three' was added to the line, but it is evident that this had

to be done to maintain the rhyming. In this case the translator excludes the blank space and includes 'at three' because the inclusion of the phrase still retains the sense of 'nonsense', if not accentuating it. The form has been changed

too. In the source language text, it is in a single line, but in the target language text the line is divided into two. It is no doubt difficult to translate nonsense verse of one culture to the nonsense verse of another culture. Hence these devices were adopted by the translator to render the sense of the particular nonsense verse keeping the form of 'nonsensicalness' intact. Let us observe another line from the same piece: "*Shakehand*" ar "*dada*" bolo shob shodh bodh ghore cholo.¹⁴ This has been translated as: 'Shake hands, old man—it's time I went. Don't take offence where none was meant.'¹⁵



Sketch for Abol Tabol by Sukumar Ray

Here the culture-specific sense of the word *dada* could not be substituted by the literal equivalent 'elder brother', hence to convey the sense of that word in English, the phrase 'old man' was aptly used.

When we refer to Indian writing in English, it is really the Empire writing back, in Salman Rushdie's words.¹⁶ In various style sheets we are instructed to underline or italicize 'foreign' words. As an Indian English writer why should I italicize or underline that which is true or non-foreign to me? Who am I italicizing or underlining for? I have to remember that I am the subject and not the object. So, we find that Amitav Ghosh in his novel, *The Sea of Poppies*, does not italicize oft-used Indian words and does not provide a glossary for words and phrases such as 'shaytan',¹⁷ 'hurremzad' (ibid.), 'one lakh sicca rupees' (86), 'pukka rai-sahib' (52), 'bayl-gari' (54). It is subverting the paradigm of colonizer-colonized binary. Indian writers use English to translate the thoughts, views, and experiences of their community into English.

Raja Rao in his introduction to *Kanthapura* rightly points out that Indian writing in English has a unique nature:

The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as distinctive and

colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.¹⁸

So, when Indian authors write in English, they do so in a language which is not their own, yet very much theirs. Let us now observe the linguistic aspects. If we consider the syntax of Bengali, there too a translator will encounter problems while translating. The transfer from one linguistic syntactical pattern to another is not possible in terms of Bengali to English or vice versa. In Bengali the pattern of a sentence is subject-object-verb, while in English it is subject-verb-object. Let us observe two sentences, one in Bengali and the other in English.

Take the Bengali sentence, *Aami maach khaai*. As per the Bengali syntax, subject-object-verb, the translation would be: I fish eat. As per the English syntax, subject-verb-object, the translation would be: I eat fish.

Regarding the linguistic pattern one cannot translate without being well versed in the grammar of both the source language and the target language. The case would have certainly been different in Bengali to Oriya or Bengali to Assamese translations.


In the Bengali syntax, there is also a tendency to repeat the same word twice for the sake of emphasis. Suppose we have a sentence, '*Dekho dekho, ki sundar sundar phool!*' The English translation would be: 'Look, what beautiful flowers!' We do not say, 'Look look, what beautiful beautiful flowers!' There is another such example from Sukumar Ray's *Ha Ja Ba Ra La*: '*Buro omni abar tere uthlo, "Pher tak tak bolchish?"*'¹⁹ This has been translated by Professor Chaudhuri as "Did I hear you say bald again?" the Old Man roared.²⁰ The word 'bald' has been put in italics suggesting to the reader that there is something special about it.

The glossary and notes are important parts of any translated text, although the translator



Sukumar Ray

may decide not to include any. *The Select Nonsense of Sukumar Ray* does not provide any glossary or notes. It is perhaps a way of telling the reader, 'This is my culture, if you want to know it, take the initiative to discover it yourself.' Gone are the days when Indian translators used to feel the otherness of their existence. Now Indian translators cater to their fellow Indians and not to the international audience. So, they provide glossary or notes only if they really feel that some words and expressions need explanation. Even such glossaries do not go beyond a couple of pages. In *Selected Short Stories* of the series 'The Oxford Tagore Translations', instead of a glossary, we find notes for each story. In them, several concepts have been explained like '*for fear of going hungry*: It was traditionally believed, or at least held humorously, that to utter a miser's name would crack one's rice-pot asunder, depriving one of food that day.'²¹ Kinship terms and mythical figures have also been explained in the notes.

When translating a source language text into the target language, the goal of the translator is to assess how best to deliver the appeal of the original to the target language reader. Therefore the act of translating a text is also a quest for newer ways of experimenting through which the translator would wish to draw a favourable inference. 

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Evolution: Darwin, Sufism, and Sri Aurobindo

Dr K V Raghupathi

E VOLUTION IS A SCIENTIFICALLY established phenomenon. Evidence for the evolution of life comes from palaeontology, comparative anatomy, morphology, embryology, and comparative biochemistry. The theory of evolution was systematically and scientifically studied by Charles Darwin, and expounded clearly in his two famous books, *Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871). The first text related human beings to the lower forms of life and the second dealt with the evidence that human beings had descended from apes. These discoveries had outraged the orthodox and undermined the average person's faith in Christianity in general and the Bible in particular in the Europe of the nineteenth century. This had divided people into two groups—evolutionists and creationists—and a continuous battle ensued between them.

Darwin's Theory of Evolution

The creationists hold on to a literal interpretation of the Bible. Those that scream and shout their objections to evolutionists cannot deny the solid evidence for evolution. The key difficulty occurs because of their religious stand which is based on an archaic world view. Few of them seem to accept that old sacred books may also be interpreted figuratively. When the Bible is interpreted allegorically, verses about creation, Adam and Eve, and so on, are thus seen as symbolic. Terms like 'heaven', 'angel', 'devil', could be viewed as metaphoric descriptions of certain

mental states of human beings. But this does not seem to convince the orthodox followers.

Darwin and other nineteenth century biologists found compelling evidence for biological evolution in the comparative study of living organisms, in their geographic distributions, and in the fossils of extinct organisms. Since Darwin's time, the evidence from these sources has become considerably stronger and more comprehensive, while biological disciplines that emerged more recently—genetics, biochemistry, physiology, ecology, animal behaviour (ethology), and especially molecular biology—have supplied powerful additional evidence and detailed confirmation of Darwin's evolutionary propositions. The amount of information about evolutionary history stored in the DNA and proteins of living things is virtually unlimited; scientists can reconstruct any detail of the evolutionary history of life.¹

Rudimentary theories of evolution were found even among the ancient Greeks, and among Indians. All life has sprung from one primordial living cell that replicated itself and survived. These old traces are found in every living tissue and also in the development of the foetus. Philosophically, this is a rational and comprehensive theory of life. And we still wonder why it takes so long for people to see the logic in it.

Sufi View of Evolution

Let us examine what Sufism says about evolution. But before that, let us first know and understand what Sufism is and who a Sufi is.

Sufism is a mystical order in Islam and the Sufis are wandering mystics. The word 'Sufi' means 'whole' referring to the woollen garments worn by these wandering mystics. Persia was the chief point of origin for Sufism. Sufis were identified as dervishes, Persian for 'beggar', and fakirs or *faqir*, Arabic for 'poor'. Dervishes in the twelfth century often chanted religious hymns and danced in a typical circling manner. Fakirs were Muslim ascetics usually belonging to a religious order, but wandering independently. Many of the famous Persian poets were Sufis, such as Saadi, Hafiz, Rumi, and Omar Khayyam. Sufis interpreted the Koran by means of storytelling. The *tariqa*, way, to Reality shown by them includes the steps of repentance, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience, and trust. The key to these ethics is love.

Now let us examine how Sufism views evolution. The Sufi conception is spiritual. It regards human evolution as a self-regulated, psycho-behavioural, transformational process. Six hundred years before Darwin, the Sufi sage Jalaluddin Rumi wrote in his poem 'What Shall I Be':

I have again and again grown like grass;
I have experienced even hundred and seventy
moulds.
I died from minerality and became vegetable;
And from vegetativeness I died and became
animal.
I died from animality and became man.
Then why fear disappearance through death?
Next time I shall die
Bringing forth wings and feathers like angels:
After that soaring higher than angels—
What you cannot imagine. I shall be that.²

Evolution was known to Sufis centuries ago and they were familiar with the transformative process because of direct experience; it was not just a speculative theory to them. Evolution is an important word in Sufism. According to it, a human being is the product of evolution. This

evolution is continuous till a person establishes direct contact with the cosmic reality. Several stages are involved in this process. These stages are self-evolving during which the seeker grows continuously. It normally commences with a de-conditioning process, the breaking of mental sets and false expectations, the taming of the ego and the animal self. The goal of transformation is realized as the result of the mutual efforts of the teachers and students, with the timely intervention of the divine in the form of grace. When the goal is attained through several stages of development, the student is no longer in the need of the guide, and is free to teach or to operate in any way that is required and beneficial.³

Man is the product of evolution. He continues this process. But the 'new' faculties, for which he yearns (generally unknowingly) come into being as a result of necessity. In other words, he now has to take part in the development of his own evolution. 'Organs come into being as a response to necessity. Therefore increase your necessity.'

When he does not realize this, man is in a state which is referred to as 'sleep'. He has to 'wake up'.

There is a means of doing this, but the means is not through scholastic endeavor and what man takes to be the exercise of intellect. The means is by what is called the 'direct perception of Truth'.

Man's thinking pattern is in the ordinary way based upon alternation and changes of mood. He needs what is conceived of as unification of mentation.

Man's perceptions are faulty, because they are subjective and relative. They are also 'conditioned', so that he interprets things according to limited, not objective, standards. He may therefore be said to have little capacity for real judgement.

There are realms of mind far beyond the ordinary state of man. These advanced realms cannot completely be rendered in the language of the brain as it stands.

Because of these limitations, man needs the guidance of one who knows more.

The methods used to help in the production of the higher state of perception include historical, religious and fable frameworks, as well as exercises of all kinds.

All such formulations are 'ways'.

Men have warped and made useless these 'ways' by repetitiously insisting on literal meanings for the figurative. Thus are 'idols' made.

When man reaches behind exterior form, he can see that such forms, apparently multiple, stand before one and the same thing.

Those teachings were given by ancient sages, and by Moses, Jesus and Mohammed. They have been changed and used in a minor and inefficient way.

This changing process is due to the use of man's vanity, where, for instance, he imagines that he can conceive more than he can at any given moment. As a result, giving a name to an undefinable concept makes him think that he has mastered it; or can master it, through having named it.

Beyond the confines of outward religion, man cannot truly call himself a Jew, a Christian, a Moslem. Ritual and dogmas have no place in this sphere.

Man can be conceived as incomplete, a 'limb severed from a body'.

The effort of man to reunite with the understanding from which he is cut off can be called 'the religion, or duty, of Love'. But this is not a religion as such things are normally understood by man.

The 'eye', the advanced organ of perception of that from which man is cut off in the normal way, is within man.

External impressions 'condition' man, so that he is insensitive to inner impressions.

Any 'language' (terminology) may be used to refer to the transformation of man. This is

why such conventions as the language of alchemy are used; or the language of myth and fable, which often refers to psychological processes, not to historical events.

Those who have developed the 'higher perceptions' sometimes have to conceal this fact, for social and other reasons, behind a locally acceptable facade.⁴

Sufism, therefore, adds a spiritual dimension to evolution and development. It holds to the view that humans are self-evolving beings. And of course, all famous founders of world's major religions and sects are considered by Sufis to be highly evolved personages. Darwinism is not square with this psycho-spiritual interpretation of evolution. It is purely empirical, limited in scope, and undependable. The Sufi conception of evolution is different from that of Darwinism in that the former holds that instead of being fortuitous, human being can take part in determining their own evolution. Sufis contend that evolution continues in infinite stages after clinical death and that it is a universal phenomenon.

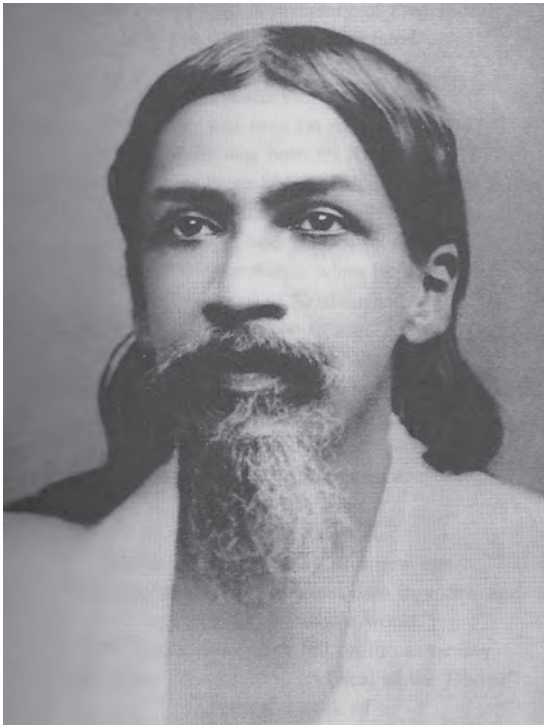
Sufism holds on to the dictum, 'Be in the world but not of it.' It implies that you can function in the world but not be attached to it. This is similar to the concept of unselfish action given in the Bhagavadgita. Another unique feature of the Sufis is the distinction they make between relative and absolute truth. Relative truths include widespread behaviour patterns, shared values, moral codes, laws and even scientific principles. Absolute truth remains so irrespective of whether people recognize it to be so. They exist independent of human agreement. 'Sufism is truth without form.'⁵ The existence of relative truth does not prove the non-existence of universal truth. The enigmatic quality of 'beyond everything' of a Sufi mystic is understood in the following story:

In one of the great court banquets, everyone was seated according to rank awaiting the entry of the King. In came a plain, shabby man and took a seat above everyone else. His boldness angered the Prime Minister, who ordered the newcomer to identify himself. 'Was he a minister?' 'No. More.' 'Was he a King?' 'No. Above him.' 'Was he then the Prophet?' 'No. More.' 'Are you then God?' asked the Prime Minister. 'No, I am beyond that also,' replied the poor man. 'There is nothing beyond God,' retorted the Prime Minister. 'That nothing' came the response, 'is me!'⁶

It is for this utter negating attitude of the Sufi mystics that a number of them were persecuted by religious zealots; due to which they had to flee to remote places. It is on this account that some expositors have seen Sufism as an import from outside into the mainstream of Islam.

Sufis also believe in destiny but claim that the perfected ones are capable of controlling their own destinies—even transcending them. To

Sri Aurobindo



summarize, the way of the Sufi is a direct path to illumination and knowledge, but a path that is hidden from the conventional eye. We must break this conventionality and open our minds to the unfamiliar, the unexpected, and the unknown. The wisdom of the Sufis ultimately lies in realizing the self.

Evolution According to Sri Aurobindo

For Sri Aurobindo, a seer, poet, and Indian nationalist of the twentieth century, the theory of evolution is much more comprehensive, detailed, and illuminating. In fact, evolution occupies a pivotal position in his teachings and is based on his personal experience. He later studied the Vedas and corroborated the conclusions he had already reached. In this sense, he is more in the tradition of the rishis, seers of mantras than in that of the recorders of the Smritis or the commentators of the scriptures.

Sri Aurobindo believes in evolution of life, especially of human beings. He was more interested in the development of a person's intuition and the deification of the mind, matter, and life on earth. His teachings comprising his philosophy and spiritual practices are intertwined and interpenetrating. They are vitally connected with one another and codified in his two famous works, *The Life Divine*, his literary magnum opus, and *The Synthesis of Yoga*. In these we may find the path laid down by him through which we may attain the intensely coveted divine life.

For Sri Aurobindo creation is a two-way process: involution and evolution, that is, the descent and the ascent. The involution explains how life came into existence, albeit not in the Darwinian sense. According to him, as later corroborated by the Vedas, the spirit exists; the spirit alone exists, 'one without a second.' All else is willed manifestation of the spirit. The spirit is characterized by Satchidananda, which


is immanent and transcendent. According to him the spirit is unknown but not unknowable. Being self-existent and self-determined, it is out of its bliss that all creation issues, which is its sport. This is the becoming aspect of reality. In this sport or becoming is the root of involution. Matter may be said to be the lowest and the last point of such involution. In matter, consciousness is much involved. So far, humans are the most evolved of animals as they are more conscious than other beings.

Sri Aurobindo describes evolution in the Sufi manner, as a rediscovery of consciousness in its ascending order till it finally becomes pure consciousness and reaches again the stage of Satchidananda. The question arises: How best can man help the evolutionary process already in progress? For this he shows the path of *Integral Yoga*. According to Sri Aurobindo, existence is a mystery and a problem only for humanity. Therefore, only humanity has to solve it. Many solutions have been suggested and tried so far. Here is one which is convincing and dynamic. First, Sri Aurobindo says that a human being must free oneself from the lower nature consisting of cravings, sensations, passions, preferences, envy, hostility, and all such vices that are born out of *tamas*. By freeing oneself from such lower nature a human being achieves integration within oneself, and then harmony and peace. Second, one has to establish peace with the outer world—this is integration with the physical world, nature. Then, finally through meditation and total surrender integration with the cosmic reality is to be achieved. Thus Sri Aurobindo's concept of evolution involves three stages—integration within oneself, integration with the outer world, and integration with the Absolute.

But, for Sri Aurobindo, creation is incomplete without involution. According to him, after merging with Satchidananda, a person should not remain there and attain salvation exclusively for

oneself. One has to work for the emancipation of the human race. Emancipation does not lie merely in the attainment of liberation and absorption into the absolute cosmic reality but in the deification of mind, life, and matter, in the here and the now. According to Sri Aurobindo, this can be done when the super-mind is realized and its powers are invoked for this purpose. This is known as *Integral Yoga* or *Supramental Yoga of the Supermind*.

Conclusion

For Sri Aurobindo creation is involution, evolution, and again involution—a triple way process. In Sufism, it is always ascension and not descension though Sufis occasionally guide students who are really interested by way of severe tests. Sufis don't publicise themselves. If they are not sought after, they never teach. They enjoy the divine ecstasy by themselves. For Sri Aurobindo, such ecstasy cannot be the exclusive privilege of the seeker. The realized person has to work for humanity and guide it towards the complete deification of life. Thus Sri Aurobindo's concept of evolution is more comprehensive, dynamic, total, and illuminating. 

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Franklin B Sanborn: A Reassessment

Somenath Mukherjee

(Continued from the previous issue)

A Renaissance Man

FRANKLIN SANBORN WAS BORN in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, on 15 December 1831. His family roots went back to the seventeenth century New Englanders of eminence. It is known that, 'His father, Aaron Sanborn, was a direct descendant of Stephen Bachiler, a clergyman and scholar, who had founded the town of Hampton, New Hampshire, in the seventeenth century. The Leavitt family, of which Sanborn's mother was a member, was equally well established in the area of eastern New Hampshire.'¹⁵ Franklin was successful as a teacher, an author, an abolitionist and a social reformer who has to his credit more than three hundred articles, books, and poems. Those apart, he was said to be 'a professional lecturer, an amateur gardener, an ambitious classicist, a literary critic, an inveterate traveller, a fascinated observer of and commentator on New England and national politics and a personal friend and associate of the "Concord" authors—Emerson, Thoreau, Channing, and Hawthorne' (ibid.).

Franklin went to Harvard in the summer of 1852, where during his days as a student he had shown excellence in his studies and was introduced to many of the prominent persons of Cambridge and Boston. Among those were Harriet Beecher Stowe, members of the Alcott family, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Samuel Gridley Howe, Theodore Parker, and his teacher—the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. While at Harvard he used to visit the vicinity of Concord and gained acquaintance with

Ralph Waldo Emerson. At the behest of Emerson he opened a school in Concord similar to the one run earlier by Henry David Thoreau and his brother John. Though his school averaged thirty to forty students per term during its eight-year tenure, it was quite befitting to the population of the village which was but a small farming community till the beginning of the twentieth century. But the dearth of students was more than compensated by the distinguished children belonging to Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James Sr, and John Brown, who attended the school.

In 1862 Franklin married his cousin Louise Leavitt. The following year due to the hardships caused by the American Civil War, he had to close his school and seek employment elsewhere. Earlier in 1856 he had become the 'Boston Correspondent' of the *Springfield Republican*, a newspaper in Massachusetts; an assignment he kept till almost the end of his life. Now, after closing his school he first assumed the post of a publisher, and later took the editorship of the *Boston Commonwealth*.

Sanborn's interest in the area of social reform and his serious study of the social sciences increased in 1865. His activities and contributions to the world of America's social science and social reform movements are too numerous to list here; but, to name a few, he was one of the founders of the American Social Science Association (1865), the Massachusetts Infant Asylum (1865), the Clarke School for the Deaf (1867), the Prison Conference of Cincinnati (1870),

and the National Conference of Charities and Correction (1874). In 1879 he was appointed the Inspector of State Charities for Massachusetts, the first of its kind in the country, and held the post till 1888. He was also a member of the board of trustees of the Perkins Institution for the Blind for many years. Moreover, it was Franklin Sanborn who established the first collegiate course in the social sciences at Cornell University, where he was listed as a special lecturer for the academic years 1884–7. He also lectured at Cornell in the social sciences for a term during 1887–8, but declined the same offer in 1911 presumably because of his growing commitments, constant travelling, lecturing, and attending to numerous meetings, which continued well into his seventies. In 1879 Sanborn, jointly with William Torrey Harris, established the Concord School of Philosophy, one of the earliest of the American summer schools, which was closed in 1888 after the death of A Bronson Alcott, a leading force behind the institution. Sanborn had been all along the Secretary of the Faculty in the school.

The Path Begins

Swami Vivekananda went to Boston with Franklin Sanborn on 24 August 1893. The following day he moved to Annisquam leaving the latter to go on his own way. But before they parted, Swamiji obviously had impressed the Concord Sage as is evident from two subsequent letters Swamiji wrote to Professor John Henry Wright from Salem on 30 August and 2 September. In the first letter he wrote: 'I have received an invitation with full direction from Mr Sanborn. So I am going to Saratoga [Springs] on Monday.'¹⁶ And likewise the second reads: 'Mr Sanborn has written to me to come over to Saratoga on Monday and I am going accordingly. I would stop then at a boarding house called Sanatorium. If

any news come from Chicago in the meanwhile I hope you will kindly send it over to the Sanatorium, Saratoga' (7.450).

This was no easy feat, as we know that Sanborn was 'A man of extremely strong principles, he became instantly and bitterly antipathetical toward anyone who he felt acted without principle; a man of extremely strong bias, he was psychologically unable to comprehend or tolerate a viewpoint that differed from his own. He could be almost unbelievably loyal toward a person or cause that he believed to be in the right.'¹⁷

On 21 August 1893 the *New York Times* wrote: 'The Education Department of the American Social Science Association offers an unusually attractive programme for its day at Saratoga, Sept. 5.'¹⁸ We can be more than sure that when this news went to the press, the appearance of Swami Vivekananda on that august occasion and his lectures there were inconceivable. But that is exactly what happened, and nothing less than a last minute intervention by Franklin B Sanborn could have made this inclusion possible. A brief history of the American Social Science Association will help us to understand the exact import of Swamiji's participation on that occasion.

As a remedial measure to reverse many social ills, abuses, and sufferings, several leading members and reformers had established in 1865 the American Social Science Association (ASSA), the first official American social science society and the 'mother' of all modern social science organizations, modelled on the melioristic British Social Science Association. Since the inception of this institution, the pivotal role played by Franklin Sanborn is thus acknowledged: 'The career of the ASSA's perennial executive secretary and national spokesman, Franklin Sanborn, demonstrates the normative goals of the association. ... Sanborn declared that "social science ... by its very nature rushes to an application. ... We are pupils in such

a school as that of Mr Squires, where the first class in hydraulics daily took a turn at the pump.”¹⁹

Swamiji gave his first speech at the ASSA convention on the evening of 5 September at the Court of Appeals Rooms, Town Hall. His topic was ‘The Mohammedan Rule in India’. The following day, while reporting on the session, the *Daily Saratoga* wrote: ‘The platform was next occupied by Vive Kananda, a Monk of Madras, Hindoostan, who preached throughout India. He is interested in social science and is an intelligent and interesting speaker. He spoke on Mohammedan rule in India.’²⁰ On the same date the local gossip column of the paper reads: ‘Swami Vive Kananda, an educated Hindoo who lately arrived in this country from India, is in attendance in the social science convention this week and has twice spoken to crowded parlors at Dr Hamilton’s on the manners, customs, and beliefs of the people of that wonderful country. He is an entertaining speaker, a highly educated man and his lectures, covering a wide range of topics, were very interesting. He is a striking figure in his oriental costume, and the public are invited to see and hear him at the Institute tonight at seven o’clock sharp. The lecture closes at 7:30.’²¹ This shows that in between his lectures at the convention Swamiji was also invited to give two parlour lectures before an eager audience.

Reporting the proceedings of the second day’s morning session of 6 September, the *Daily Saratoga* of 7 September wrote, ‘The second day’s session of the American Social Science Association opened auspiciously yesterday morning there being a large gathering. The addresses and papers all pertained to finance which, especially at this time, proved very interesting. ... Col. Jacob L Greene of Hartford read a paper on “Bi-metallism,” treating the subject in a very exhaustive manner. A paper by Dr Charles B Spahr of New York followed on the status of silver which

was attentively listened to. A paper by President E Benjamin Andrews of Brown University on “The Monetary experiment in India,” was a masterpiece for thought and intellectual ability. ... At the conclusion of the reading Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk addressed the audience in an intelligent and interesting manner, taking for his subject the use of silver in India.’ (1,57–8) It is known that Swamiji gave another lecture in the evening session of 6 September; but no further information of the event has come to light.

We also find a report in the *New York Times* of 10 September 1896 which reads: ‘The meetings of the Social Science Association have been a considerable factor in the week’s excitement, attracting a large and representative gathering of persons at every session. A most picturesque figure at these meetings has been the Hindu priest (Swami Vive Kananda), who has spoken at several of them upon the deplorable condition of the poor of India and some of the causes which bring it about. In his preaching he has traversed almost every square mile of the great empire, and in his capacity of monk he has entered the homes and studied the lives of the poor people of his race as is not given to even every native. He is eloquent with the distress and wrongs on his kind. He speaks most fluent and musical English and is master of a natural and dramatic oratory that is most persuasive. On Thursday afternoon in the drawing room of the United States Hotel he gave an informal talk, and in his habit of orange cloth which, girded about the waist, is monkish only in cut, and his turban of orange stuff wound about his fine head with a grace that would be the despair of a coiffeur, his dark, chiseled face, with the expression of sadness that is usually seen in the Oriental, he made a marked personality in striking contrast to the conventional Westerners who surrounded him. He left to-day for Chicago to attend the Congress of Religions.’²²

This news was dated 9 September and, therefore, the information that 'he left to-day for Chicago' is a clear indication that Swami Vivekananda left Saratoga Springs for Chicago on Saturday, 9 September 1893. Marie Louise Burke made a tentative guess that it either was 8 September or the subsequent day.²³ Asim Chaudhuri in his recent research has written that: 'After visiting Boston, Annisquam, Salem, Saratoga Springs and other small towns in New England Swamiji came back to Chicago on 9 September.'²⁴ With what is available in the *New York Time* we may now say for sure that it was on 9 September that he left Saratoga Springs. This was exactly two days before he electrified the great audience at the Columbus Hall with his 'Sisters and Brothers of America'. But well before that path-breaking speech, Swamiji had his finger on the intellectual pulse of America and began to impress and love her people.

Conclusion

According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: 'Transcendentalism is an American literary, political, and philosophical movement of the early nineteenth century, centered around Ralph Waldo Emerson.'²⁵ In various ways Franklin Sanborn had actively associated with Emerson, Concord, and Transcendentalism; and this role has made him an important figure in the American Renaissance.

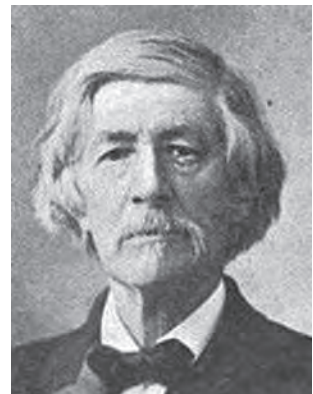
Sanborn's unique presence during the major shift in the social attitude in America is well defined by *The Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism*. Pointing out the ASSA's role in signalling a 'shift from the romantic individualism and scholarly eclecticism of the earlier generation of Transcendentalism to the increasing professionalization of the social science disciplines during the last half of the 19th century', the *Encyclopedia* writes: 'As the personification of the ASSA, Franklin Sanborn represented this bridge

between the two generations and between the intellectual commitments of Transcendentalism and the later-century social sciences. ... In Sanborn's understanding ... there was no separation between the concerns of scientists and philosophers, or between the work of improving society and the intellectual work of improving oneself.'²⁶

In his obituary dated 24 February 1917, *The New York Times* wrote the next day: 'Franklin B Sanborn, editor of the *Boston Commonwealth* during the civil war and for many years an editor of the *Springfield Republican* and the *Journal of Social Science*, died today in Westfield N J in his eighty-seventh year. ... Mr Sanborn, who was known as "The Sage of Concord," was intimate with many of the famous authors of this country and wrote their biographies. Among these were Thoreau, Emerson, Dr S G Howe, and Dr Earle.'²⁷

In 1880 Sanborn built a fine brick house on Elm Street in Concord which still stands today on a bend of the Sudbury River. He breathed his last on 24 February 1917 and his funeral was held at the Unitarian Church in Concord on 26 February. By order of the Massachusetts Senate, the Flags of the *Commonwealth* were flown at half-mast for three days and the Senate passed a formal expression of bereavement. Franklin Sanborn was buried in the Sleepy Hollow cemetery, not far from the graves of Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott. The only monument to his memory is the Sanborn Junior High School in Concord—undeniably a befitting one for someone who came there as a teacher but finally became much more.


Franklin B Sanborn



While imploring his listeners in California on 1 February 1900 to read the *Gita*, Swamiji said: 'I would advise those of you who have not read that book to read it. If you only knew how much it has influenced your own country even! If you want to know the source of Emerson's inspiration, it is this book, the *Gita*. He went to see Carlyle, and Carlyle made him a present of the *Gita*; and that little book is responsible for the Concord Movement. All the broad movements in America, in one way or other, are indebted to the Concord party.'²⁸

An echo of what Swamiji said long ago can even be heard today: 'The town of Concord, Massachusetts, is widely celebrated in American culture as a pastoral place. ... it became the bucolic centre of the American Renaissance, where Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau waged their own revolutions of the spirit.'²⁹

Therefore, during the unrecorded interactions between Swami Vivekananda and Franklin

Benjamin Sanborn when providence drew them together for a few days, it was in essence the sublime message of Kamarpukur that finally travelled to Concord. For it was exactly there, where 'all the broad movements' of America had their origins, that the first and foremost exponent of Vedanta in the US acknowledged a time-honoured tradition of a mighty nation he chose to give his best. 

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*The Grave of Franklin B Sanborn
at the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord*



Religious Dimensions of Karl Popper's Philosophy

Joe E Barnhart

(Continued from the previous issue)

Redemption

WE ARE ABLE TO compensate for our moral failures in many cases, but the disturbing social reverberations that we have created may require added forgiveness. When we forgive we ordinarily want to know that the offender not only knows he has done wrong, but also regrets having done so. In forgiving we want also some sign and perhaps clear evidence that the offender has resolved not to repeat his offence. Ideally this implies some character modification. Religions have traditionally stressed this point, and for good reason. I suggest that Popper's personal religion is best discovered in his critique of Marxism, especially what he calls Utopian Marxism. If 'love your enemy' entails at the very least 'respect your enemy as an individual', then Popper's critique of Marxism has roots in human love. English philosopher Gilbert Ryle is correct in saying that Popper's *In Defense of Plato* is both one of the most insightful criticisms of Plato's philosophy and one of the most profound defences of Plato as 'the greatest philosopher of all time'. With A N Whitehead, Popper saw Western philosophy as footnotes to Plato. Popper's most telling criticism of Platonism is his exposure of Plato's totalitarianism, which obliterates the distinction between areas of private judgement and of public control. In the history of both Catholicism and Protestantism, this wall of separation has often been scaled and even torn down. Roger Williams was

excommunicated from Massachusetts just because he exposed the serpent of tyranny coiling inside the faith of Puritanism. The Marxist Puritans under the banner of Lenin and later Stalin were in the bloody tradition of the Inquisition and John's Calvin's complicity in the murder of Michael Servetus. I submit that Karl Popper is in the tradition of the Reverend Roger Williams, who understood profoundly 1 Peter 2:6–9. All believers are priests—the priesthood of believers. From Popper's perspective, all human beings are both believers and sceptics. No one professes to believe every purported revelation set forth. When faith's feelings and expectations become activated in curiosity, it risks and even requires scepticism. Speaking is a personal and communal act of activated faith, trusting one's tongue and words to elect a response from whomever or whatever is addressed. Scepticism emerges when reservations surface regarding the expected response. In some cases, faith is made to appear safer or less risky by expecting a response from only a range of possibilities. Faith in X is sustained but compromised if its expected responses are half-consciously made to be less precise or even ambiguous. Somewhere, the line between ambiguity and bad faith becomes blurred.

Test the Spirits

'Test the Spirits', writes the author of 1 John 4:1. Popper's persistent commitment to the open society—to which Roger Williams, the five

Baptists hanged in Boston, and others became prophetic forerunners—is an open confession of his faith. He places more faith or trust in a society of free individuals than in the controlling State or Church. Indeed, the ‘secular state’ promoted by the disciples of Roger Williams is the same as the society envisaged by Popper in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Thanks to John Milton’s assistance in finding him a printer, Williams succeeded in publishing *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution, for the Cause of Conscience* in mid-July 1644. He began his book with an earlier Anabaptist ‘letter’ bound together with John Cotton’s 1632 response followed by Williams’ protracted response to Cotton. The second part of the book consists of Williams’ response to a ‘Model of Church and Civil Power’ drawn up in 1635 in Salem, Massachusetts, but not previously printed. Popper stands in the tradition of those like Williams who argued that toleration was an unworthy goal: only freedom would suffice. Freedom is mocked, Williams contended, if it is not extended without qualification to all consciences: ‘Pagan, Jewish, Turkish, or Antichristian.’ While Popper was working on *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Hitler was conquering more of Europe and forging deep into Russia. Popper escaped Austria before Hitler’s army invaded Austria. Had he not, he might have become one of the Jews who perished at Auschwitz.

Humility as an Element of the Institution of Science

Like other human mortals, scientists and philosophers have to struggle with what religious traditions have called the sin or moral flaw of ‘pride’, which can be distinguished from taking pleasure in one’s successes and achievements. Popper’s approach to epistemology helps secure a foundation or structure for countering

arrogance and encouraging humility, especially if his approach becomes an ingredient of the structure of the scientific community. Humility as practice can be reinforced by institutionalizing the process of open inquiry rather than by confusing humility with Uriah Heap’s posturing self-effacement. Humility begins perhaps early when we individually and in groups recognize that we learn by trial and error. The species is guided by both inborn and acquired knowledge. From this beginning new conjectures soon emerge, since reality ‘out there’ is not always at our command. New conjectures become necessary, which the child discovers while crawling. By crawling into the wall, she or he begins to learn about trial and error—and revisions. Later, we meet many new walls. Many *tests* of our initial conjectures are thrust upon us. We learn to reject some of our own conjectures, which run into walls and serve as early lessons in humility. As Popper sees it, faith is exemplified in our learning to trust our own ventures in improving the skills of rejecting some of our falsified conjectures and false moves and then of learning to *trust ourselves* and our environment sufficiently to venture new conjectures and new moves—in some cases with appropriate fear and trembling. Some of our enacted conjectures work; others do not, sometimes humbling us with knots on our heads or severe injuries to our conjectures and to some of our firm beliefs.

Epistemic Humility vs. Idolatry

In contrast with blind faith, wisdom enters the picture when memory assists us in recording and learning from a background of our own trials and errors and the trials and errors of those who went before us. So, yes, Popper’s philosophy exemplifies faith because it encourages and even intensifies curiosity and adventure—even into the partially unknown. Blind faith, however, borders

on pride and arrogance because it often lacks humility, ignores our individual and collective finitude and vulnerability. To acknowledge the death or partial death of one of our conjectures or even a cherished theory may be viewed as a step in rejecting idolatry. Popper's Jewish heritage saw the foolishness of worshipping the works of our own hands and minds. Our best theories are not eternal divine beings, and their offspring are not emanations from omniscience. Science in some respects institutionalizes its own humility by attending carefully to what Popper insisted on calling falsification. His critique of positivism came primarily from his argument that not even science as a mighty collective force can *verify* its theories. There is no standard rule or papal chair in science to declare the proper number of pieces of evidence required to ordain a theory or hypothesis as verified. Popper does not, however, veer off into something like charismatic relativism. To the contrary, he uses the term 'confirmation' to refer to the rigorous *process* by which great energy in research and experiment has been devoted both to formulating viable hypotheses and to testing them *severely*. The application of the new conjecture thus involves new tests. A confirmed theory will be the one more thoroughly formulated in depth and most rigorously tested repeatedly. Its 'confirmation'—also a religious term—means that it is the best among rivals that we have thus far—after rigorous and repeated severe testing has been carried out.

Theology and Testing

It would be misleading to suggest that Popper was well versed in theology, although like Einstein, he had studied Spinoza. When a rabbi asked Einstein if he believed in God, he replied by cable that he believed in the God of Spinoza. For Spinoza, God is the creative dimension of Nature,

Nature *naturing*, while Nature is the product, Nature *natured*. Popper is not impressed with the kind of theology that is primarily a process of establishing definitions. Nevertheless, he did acknowledge that 'God' was a metaphysical idea or theory. And ordinarily for Popper, a metaphysical system of ideas and theories is a background program for scientific research. 'We are all', he writes, 'metaphysicians and science derives historically from metaphysics.' This is a long way from the logical positivism that both Popper and Einstein rejected.

Two lines of thought are worth pursuing in interfacing Popper's philosophy with theology. First, by looking at theology as World 3 developments, we can easily detect a rich history of trial and error in the generation, formulation, and criticism of its theories in great detail. We can detect the reformulation of many theories, both major and minor, in the development of theology. Thomas Aquinas, A N Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and Peter Bertocci are all examples of this. Karl Barth's astute theory of the eternal *modes* of God is a rather ingenious way of dealing with the knotty conjecture about the Trinity. The growth of scholarship in biblical studies is both astonishing and impressive. Furthermore, equally impressive is the attempt to apply the insights of social science research into numerous traditionally religious themes and practices. It has both enriched our understanding of religion and gives more depth to such sciences as sociology, psychology, and anthropology.

Popper's epistemology of objective knowledge is heavily indebted to C S Peirce's philosophy and the psychology of William James and John Dewey, although it cannot be reduced to pragmatism. His psychology of learning has many affinities with Dewey's *The Quest for Certainty*, and both Dewey and Popper stress that the cognitive dimension of human life is rooted



John Eccles

in the experience of problem solving, which, of course, can be observed operating in other species, including our primate ancestors. One of the major problems that has haunted the human species is the problem of death. In *The Self and Its Brain*, Popper and Eccles provide twelve engrossing dialogues in which they discuss their points of major agreement and disagreement. On the mind-body issue, both men are pluralists and interactionists. Eccles is a believer in God and the supernatural, while Popper is an agnostic who believes that '[Eccles] and Dobzhansky are right in stressing that the realization of death—of the danger of death and of the inevitability of death—is one of the great discoveries which led to full self-consciousness'.⁷ Full self-consciousness most likely arises only slowly in young children, who are not fully self-conscious of death. I would add that the shock of seeing those dear to us die has developed in some human cultures and subcultures a reaction

that may be described as a kind of collective denial of death. Popper does not say this explicitly, but I suggest that his naturalism moves him towards the conjecture that some religions have *institutionalized* the collective denial of death. Indeed, drawing heavily from Popper, I suggest that the denial of death might help account for the prevalence of dogmatism; for we understandably do not want to watch our loved ones and our dearest theories and beliefs crumble and perish, especially if they are contributing to our self-identity. By somehow becoming separated from some of our entrenched World 3 beliefs, we may feel that we have become disengaged from a meaningful life if not life itself. If religion is born out of the lingering awareness of our finitude in various dimensions of our lives, then I suspect that Popper's epistemology can in a profound sense be viewed as religious. John Dewey and William James wrote books of insight on religion. Although Popper did not, his highly fruitful work on epistemology—including his philosophy of science—can be fruitfully viewed as a major contribution towards better understanding of how we come to terms with our core-finitude and our vulnerability. When Popper says, 'Let your theories die for you', he is recommending that we not only avoid idolizing our doctrines but also avoid sacrificing ourselves to them. Most dedicated scholars can appreciate the sadness if not a measure of grief experienced in watching one of their dearest theories disintegrate before their eyes, especially when they have invested much of their lives in either birthing the theory or having aspects of their self-identity formulated and shaped by it. We have all experienced the humbling experience of seeing one of our beloved ideas enter retirement or die the death of a thousand qualifications.

God in ancient Israel was thought to sustain not only law and a level of predictability

in society, but also the conditions of repentance and redemption. Could we today view the *community* as sustaining law effectively and justly while, at the same time, deal realistically in the prison system with the need for generating forgiveness and redemption, restoration, and eventually reconciliation with the community? Can a community offer the grace of forgiveness? If so, how is repentance as observable behaviour to be characterized in the language of the Secular State? Is it possible that the Apostle Paul's struggle with the interplay of love, faith, and grace in the context of his missionary activities among the Gentiles and Jews in Galatia and Corinth might assist Europeans and Americans today in learning something about forgiveness, grace, and redemption—something that might be applicable, to the contemporary penal system operating in the prisons and jails, which could become a self-serving industry run by the State.

The Social Sciences and Redemption

Popper and Eccles understood that the variables of the reality that the social sciences must attempt to 'explain' and 'predict' can differ significantly from the variables of the physical sciences. Sociology, anthropology, and psychology cannot be reduced to chemistry or biology, but neither can those social sciences ignore them. In the attempt to make the social and behavioural sciences follow in the steps of the acclaimed 'hard sciences', social scientists might be tempted to ignore the scientific study of religious behaviour and the role of religious beliefs, doctrines, and expectations. But I think

with appropriate academic humility and modesty, which is akin to caution, the social sciences could throw considerable light on what have traditionally been viewed as largely the property of religion.

By following the groundwork of pioneers like William James, Popper, and Eccles, the social sciences today have the challenge to apply their training to the study, not of God's, but of the community's power of forgiveness, judgement, redemption, restoration, and reconciliation. The fundamentalist wing of atheism might regard this as a mere compromise with mythmakers, but

Theodosius Dobzhansky



Popper's passion for encouraging the open society and exposing the flaws of its enemies should encourage social scientists to venture into the difficult work of better understanding and examining in detail some of the elemental motifs of religion. The point is that human beings and societies currently need to exercise forgiveness wisely, reinforce repentance when appropriate, and actively support overt measures for bringing about redemption. When we speak of a novel's having redeeming features or qualities, we are not invoking supernatural categories. My argument is that in some cases, the community has been sinned against, and the community has a vested interest in promoting repentance, forgiveness, and redemption within the community. In short, the secular community can profitably learn from communities that are or have been immersed in theological language and categories. This is because human beings have to learn from their past advances and mistakes. If the conjectures, theories, and doctrines about supernatural beings are deemed no longer credible, this does not entail that we have nothing to learn today from the struggles in past human centuries, including the trials and errors in solving problems of moral failures, flaws, and broken relationships. The point is that we in the twenty-first century can learn from the way members of our species have worked to solve their problems of human finitude in various dimensions. While the Apostle Paul's putative trips to the third heaven may no longer be taken as even testable claims, we can profit from studying his conflict with Cephas and James of Jerusalem. In relating to Gentiles, Paul was dealing with the issue of grace and the means of grace that crossed ethnic identities.

The Value of Conjectures

Criticism based on misrepresentation is not genuine criticism. Popper expected not to be

immortalized in his works or exempted from criticism, but that his contributions first be understood and perhaps put to use to encourage others in their research. Traditionally religion has raised the 'meaning of life' question in a variety of ways. For Popper's naturalism, a more limited question is appropriate and useful, namely, the meaning of our lives and our work *for ourselves and the wider community*. He viewed his work as a possible contribution to the growth of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. The fruit of his years of work with Eccles in particular can throw light on ways to use the social and behavioural sciences for better understanding the various roles that religions have played and are playing in the lives of individuals and societies and their cultural fabric. If the study of religion includes the examination of ways the species has dealt with the awareness of its core-finitude, then the social sciences can contribute still greater depth to understanding more precisely how we deal with such issues as (1) death, (2) moral imperatives that emerge as communities and societies struggle to articulate the duties and responsibilities of practical social bonding, (3) the inescapable emotional vulnerabilities experienced in living daily with nature and other finite mortals, and (4) the inevitable struggles to piece together some *Weltanschauung* that provides a measure of cosmos to deal with the frights and sometimes terrors of chaos. By taking cues from the work of anthropologists who exemplify scientific humility to listen to and observe with care seemingly alien or strange communities and cultures, we open the possibility of learning how other fellow mortals deal with the threads of their core-finitude.

(To be concluded)

Reference

7. *The Self and Its Brain*, 554.

Perceiving Other Religions

Åke Sander

(Continued from the previous issue)

TAKING CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS as an example, the matter of inter-religious ‘confrontations’ refers specifically to situations in which the involved parties explicitly observe and attempt to relate to perceived differences between the two traditions. Such differences can be either *theoretical*—belief x in Christianity and y in Islam cannot both be true at the same time—or *practical*— r in Christianity and s in Islam prescribe different, incompatible, and irreconcilable ways of action in the same or similar situations. And the circumstances under which they are observed can be either *concrete* or *intellectual*. *Concrete* circumstances can be considered those in which a Christian and a Muslim factually encounter each other and must relate to what the other believes and/or practices; *intellectual* circumstances, on the other hand, can be considered those in which either a Christian or a Muslim notices inter-religious differences while, for example, reading a literary work in which the beliefs and/or practices of the other are described.

In order to experience another’s religious beliefs and practices as being those of a *different* religious tradition, we must have some notion about what are considered to be the *necessary constituting characteristics* or *properties* of our own tradition in our own specific time and place. Put more plainly, we must have some idea about the ‘things’ we must believe and/or do in order to consider ourselves and be recognized by others as members of a given religious tradition or sub-tradition. Those ‘things’ that we can choose to

neglect, set aside, or alter and still maintain our status, can be called the *non-necessary constituting characteristics* or *properties* of our tradition.

Within Islam, for example, it is common to differentiate between the *Islamic* and the *Muslim* components of the tradition, where the former refers to those beliefs and practices that are considered prescribed in the *Shari’a*—the Quran and the *Sunna*—as obligatory for all Muslims independent of time and space—components that one cannot deny or neglect and still be considered a good Muslim. Muslim components, on the other hand, are far wider in scope, involving aspects of Muslim beliefs and practices that cannot be derived from the obligations of *Shari’a*, but originate instead from various local, regional, or national traditions, and cultures—components that vary over time and space.¹⁶ These sorts of components and distinctions exist within Christianity and Hinduism as well.¹⁷

This is not to say that in most cases of inter-religious and, for that matter, intra-religious conflict there is generally a very clear opinion among the involved parties about such an ‘essential core’ of beliefs and practices that is supposed to constitute the real base of their respective faith or religious tradition.

One of the important issues in discussing which of the above-mentioned alternatives might be better than others is to begin from the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the religious adherents who are in the conflict situation, rather than from the detached, ivory-tower perspective of theologians and philosophers. In

other words, the point of view of the believer must be taken seriously even if it is *confessional* and/or *normative*.

The bottom line is that the question of who should be considered a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, or whatever is unavoidable both for believers and for those within the field of academic studies. In attempting to answer this question, some may prefer to use normative or *confessional* criteria—as most insiders tend to do—while others may prefer descriptive criteria instead—the choice of most academics. This, however, does not get us away from the fact that both types of criteria are in a sense *normative*. In other words, the question of who should be considered a Christian or a Muslim is by definition *normative* in the sense that both academics within the field of religious studies and adherents within the framework of a given tradition must begin by forming a substantive or normative opinion about the criteria by which something can be called Christianity, Islam, and so forth and someone should be counted as a Christian, a Muslim, and so forth. Even countries like India that desire to remain ‘religiously neutral’ must have some substantive criteria regarding what constitutes a religion in general and what constitutes specific religions, for example Hinduism. Freedom of religious legislation, for example, must begin with a preconception about what constitutes ‘a religion.’¹⁸ For the purposes of this discourse, however, we require neither a general definition of ‘religion’ nor a specific definition of Christianity, Islam, and so forth. The self-definitions of adherents should suffice.

The ‘Right’ Religion

With this open definition of who can be counted as a Christian, and so forth, it follows that there are different ways in which a religion can be *right*.

One option is that a religion can be right

regarding its *content of beliefs*, for example its ideas about who God is, how to best contact God, what is a human being, and so on—right or correct in the normal sense of the word with regard to its ontological, epistemological, anthropological, and soteriological assumptions.

Another option is that it can be right or correct regarding its *ethical demands or ideas*—its *norms and values*. By this I mean its conviction that the way of life it prescribes, if followed by a whole community, would lead to healthy, happy, and self-realized individuals, to the ‘best’ social relations, to the most happy, productive, and affluent society.

A third option is that it is right or correct in terms of its *rites and rituals*, meaning, for example, that the rites and rituals it prescribes are the ones that are most effective in giving human beings a path to liberation, salvation, self-realization, or whatever goal the tradition claims to be able to achieve for its adherents.

All of these things, to varying degrees and in various combinations, can also be what makes a religion the ‘right’ one.

In this connection, the important question we must deal with is: *which differences* between mine and other religious traditions should I focus on in choosing between the six or possibly seven alternatives mentioned earlier?¹⁹

As I see it, one way of approaching this question is to think about what basic functions a religion and being religious—belonging to a particular religious tradition or organization—might have for human beings: What is ‘the point’ of religions and being religious? What ‘good’ do they do? Why do we have religions at all?²⁰

Of all the suggested functions that religion and religiosity have been said to fulfil, I will suggest that the following is one of the most important:²¹ all religious traditions, in the sense that I am speaking of here, want to describe the way

that we, as human beings, ought to live the best, the right or the true human life. And in a religious tradition, this is always a life in accordance with an absolute and objective, independent of human discretion, transcendent reality—personal or impersonal.

This is a life in accordance with the ‘will of God,’ ‘the Supreme Being,’ ‘the true structures of the universe,’ ‘the ground of Reality’—with *ens realissimum*—*Heaven, Dike, Dharma, Dao, Tien*, and the like. Religions, in other words, purport to be maps or blueprints for what they consider to be the ‘good, the right, and the authentic way of life.’

In the course of our lives we must all meet with sorrow, suffering, grief, guilt, death, pointlessness, and the like. One of religion’s major functions is to help us face and to some extent understand and see the meaning of these things, and to give us practical guidance regarding how to cope with such existential moments.²² In sum, religious traditions intend to give us answers to our most basic existential questions, to our questions of life.²³

In short from the micro perspective, religions purport to give us answers to questions such as: who we are, where do we come from, why we are here—on earth, and in our specific socio-economic circumstances, health circumstances, and so on—how should we relate to suffering, sorrow, distress, death, hate, love, and friendship? How we, as human beings, are to live our lives and relate to our fellow human beings as individuals and groups as well as to other beings and nature at large if we want to live the right, the good, or the authentic human life? The fact that human beings generally need and seek answers to such questions is, I think, the main reason why religions exist.²⁴

What distinguishes religions from other ideological systems that try to ‘sell’ such ‘maps’ is that they presuppose the existence of a *transcendent*

Holy realm beyond our empirical world and propose that the right answers to our questions about life can be found in that realm. In other words, they have a *dualistic ontology* which claims that ‘everything in existence’ is divided into two ontological spheres, with the *transcendent* realm being considered ‘Holy’ in the sense of Eliade and Otto, meaning more or absolutely real and normatively supreme or absolute.²⁵ Religious traditions, in other words, are distinguished by having a specific type of ontology.

They also presuppose that either through revelation, meditation, mystical experience, or what not, we human beings can contact this transcendent reality and learn what it has to teach. Religions, in other words, also have a specific type of epistemology, which recognizes the validity of not only a ‘natural or rational’ type of knowledge, but a ‘sub-natural or rational’ and ‘supra-natural or rational’ type as well.

They also include an idea about how the universe is ‘developing’. Most religious systems propose some version of devolution rather than evolution, assuming some sort of original state of high harmony between the ‘will’ of the transcendence and the immanent world, a golden age or paradise, or the like that has degenerated over time. And they are variously optimistic about our possibility of being able to return to that ideal state, have various ideas about how and when it can be brought about, and so forth.

They all claim, however, that one of the most, if not *the* most important tasks for us humans is to try to come in contact with, learn from, and live in accordance with this transcendent, absolute reality either directly through our own experiences or indirectly through the experiences of a religious elite and the codification of their experiences in scriptures like the Bible and the Koran.

Understood in this way, all religions contain

a definite opinion about our most basic existential problem, namely that we lack this knowledge and thus do not exist or live in the right, correct, or authentic relation to God or 'the Real' or 'the Holy', that is *ens realissimum*. If we can learn to do that, we are on the way to living a correct, authentic, right, or true life. And if all of us are doing that, we are en route to the perfect world.

In sum, a typical religious person believes that: 1) there is something wrong with the human condition that needs to be corrected; 2) there is a way of correcting it; and, 3) there is a true or correct way to live. This can be explicated by saying that apart from containing an ontology, epistemology, and theory of universal development, all religious traditions contain an anthropology.

Such an anthropology contains at least the following elements:

1. An idea about what we humans, whether male, female, Swede, or Indian, can optimally be if we realize our true potentials—an idea about *the ideal human condition*.
2. A diagnosis about the way we *de facto* are and are living, which, in comparison to (1) above, is perceived as great *disharmony*.
3. An idea about the *causes* of or reasons for this disharmony, as well as whether or not it can be overcome; normally, it is believed that the disharmony *can* be overcome, making it what can be called a *positive disharmony*.
4. An idea about the *cure*, an *ordination* of things to do or follow in order to overcome this disharmony.
5. An idea about where and when the ideal state can be reached—for instance, either in the here and now or in the afterlife in some sort of transcendent existence.²⁶

All religious traditions, in other words, claim that our lives are in *need of transformation, of salvation*. Different traditions may have different

notions about how this can be achieved, but they all have some sort of idea about it.

The above points can, of course, be variously focused: they can focus on the individual, the group or humanity at large; that is, they can prescribe the same ordination for everyone, prescribe different ordinations for different groups according to some criteria such as religion, caste, ethnicity, race, nationality, or gender, or even prescribe different ordinations for different individuals according to some criteria.

In other words, notions regarding transformation or salvation constitute one of the main parameters that different religious traditions can differ about. When talking about salvation, a few distinctions must be made:

1. Salvation *from* something such as *avidya*, evil, selfishness, or sin;
2. Salvation *to* something such as union with God, absorption in Brahman, or *Nirvana*; or,
3. Salvation *with the help of* something such as belief in Christ's death and resurrection, meditation, or following the commands of God to the letter.

The main idea, however, is that we have the possibility of changing or transforming from a defective or deficient state of existence to an ideal state *if* we follow a particular way or use particular means, and that 'salvation' can be used to describe all three steps above.

Here it is most important to distinguish between *salvation as a goal* in itself and *salvation as a means* to a goal—the 'road to salvation'. In short, a road to salvation consists of the various ways or prescriptions by which a given religious tradition claims to be able to actualize its goal. Most of the time, when talking about salvation, we mean (2) above. It is also important to note that different religious traditions can differ on all these points. They can, for example, propose different 'roads to salvation', *x* and *y* and propose

that they lead to either the same, *m*, or different *m* and *n* goals. They can also propose that there is only one road, but that it will lead to different goals for different individuals or groups. The permutations are many.

As I see it, some of the main ways that different religious traditions differ from each other are that they: 1) provide different diagnoses about the human condition; 2) have different ideas about the nature of the 'ideal' human life; 3) have different ideas about the caus(es) of our 'worldly' state; 4) prescribe different roads to salvation—different cures or means by which to achieve the ideal state; and, 5) describe the end state in different terms.

My suggestion is that what primarily distinguishes different religious traditions, thus giving rise to conflicts between them, is their view on salvation, which can be called a '*soteriological inter-religious difference*'. This refers to what they claim to be 'wrong' with normal worldly human life as it is and what they prescribe as the cure that humans must do to transfer themselves from the 'bad' to the 'good' condition. In many cases this has strong implications regarding how we should organize ourselves and live together as human collectives, meaning that it has socio-political consequences that can be a source of political conflict.

Now we have come a bit closer to answering the question of what it might mean to say that a given religious tradition is 'right'. Mainly, it has to do with notions of salvation and the ways of attaining it, with views on salvation *as goal* and *as means*.

As should be rather clear, the 'correctness' or 'reasonableness' of a religious tradition's views on salvation as goal and means *presupposes* that certain ontological, epistemological, and anthropological assumptions are correct—assumptions about: what exists, how we can

acquire knowledge, what we can acquire knowledge about, what a human being is, and so on. A particular road to salvation can only work if the particular truth claims the tradition is making about the universe, knowledge and the human being are also true, and that certain things it deems to be important, of normatively high or absolute status, and the like, are true as well. If for example God exists but is, in fact, a devil, then Christianity falls apart. Of course, the same would hold true if God turned out to be entirely non-existent. In sum, a particular theory of salvation can work or be said to be right or true only if a large number of ontological, epistemological, and anthropological conditions are also true. Thus for a religious tradition to be comprehensive and rational it must somewhere in its corpus of knowledge specify the *assumptions* that must be true in order for its theory of salvation to be true *and* present solid arguments and justifications in support of such claims. In other words, the claim that a given religious tradition's theory of salvation is 'right' cannot be isolated from the fact that its more broad and general *ontological, epistemological, anthropological, and ethical* truth claims must also be 'right'.

This should serve to clarify my view that when an adherent of one religious tradition is confronted by a different tradition she or he should *primarily* consider its *soteriological* and, by extension, its *ontological, epistemological, and anthropological* theories in choosing between our six or seven different options. This, of course, does not mean that there are no other important differences that should be weighed such as theoretical differences, differences in rites and rituals, social consequences, and so forth. Nonetheless, my answer to the question of 'what makes a religion right' or 'what it means to take responsibility for one's religious beliefs' primarily concerns the areas of salvation, knowledge, and ethics.

Initially I identified 'rationality' as another important criterion when it comes to thinking through the soteriological, ontological, epistemological, and anthropological presuppositions of one's own religious tradition and comparing these with the presuppositions of others. In the closing section of this short article I will, of course, only be able to touch upon this much-discussed topic.²⁷

Rationality and Religion

Traditionally, being 'rational' means 'to exercise the ability of reason'. Thus discussions about rationality fall within the sphere of epistemology. How this plays out in various cases depends on what sort of 'human behaviour' we are attempting to assess. Here we can begin by dividing our inquiry into two main questions: What types of life-goals are *rational* to choose and pursue? And what strategies are *rational* in attempting to achieve those goals? We must also look at the question of rationality vis-à-vis various areas of human activity such as scientific thinking, choosing a life-partner, buying a house, choosing a religion, or way of being religious. Leaving aside the question of rational goals for the time being, let us focus on the strategies for achieving those goals, although much of what is said below can be applied to both.

In most discussions concerning how to act to achieve our goals, 'rationality' is roughly equated with 'optimality'; we should choose the path that enables us to reach our goal with the minimum amount of cost in time, effort, money, and so forth. And since deciding what will optimally enable us to achieve our goals in a given situation requires correct beliefs and understandings of the world, ourselves, and our capacities, it is clear that before discussing the rationality of our actions we must first discuss the rationality of those beliefs and understandings. Moreover,

since our actions are generally driven not only by our beliefs and understanding, but also by our norms, values, feelings, desires, habits, and so forth, we must consider the rationality of these things as well.

Thus one can generally and abstractly say that human beings act rationally to the extent that they hold correct beliefs about those properties of the world that are relevant to their goals and situation as well as about themselves as actors. The more the individual knows about these things, the more rationally, in terms of instrumental rationality, the individual can act to achieve her or his goals. The holding of correct beliefs about the world, other people, and oneself is undoubtedly an important element of rational action.

But what about the choosing of the goals we set for ourselves? Can certain goals be more rational to pursue than others? This obviously brings us back to the problem of correct beliefs about the world: whether some version of a religious world view or some version of a strictly materialistic-atheistic-scientific world view provides a more correct understanding of the world will certainly have a bearing on which goals are the more rational to pursue. But since we are unable to deduce an '*ought*' from an '*is*', the problem also includes a normative component. In other words, to rationally consider which goals are the best to pursue, the actor must also have a well-informed and thoroughly thought through *normative system* by which to judge the various options at her or his disposal. That is, the more complete, consistent, and coherent a normative system one has, and the more completely, coherently, and consistently one can apply it, the more rational one's choice of goals can said to be. Thus a well thought through normative system is undoubtedly another important element of rational action.

The final factor I would like to highlight in this regard concerns the actor's ability to draw

valid, justified and/or good conclusions, make correct inferences, from a limited amount of facts and information. This is an important factor since even the most knowledgeable among us have only a very limited knowledge of the world; we are all finite beings with limited intelligence and limited cognitive resources.

In terms of the first criterion concerning our beliefs or understandings about the world, we have an important decision to make: should we, in a correspondence-theoretical way, tie rationality to so-called *true* beliefs—those that are normally taken as knowledge in the natural sciences—or to so-called *socially approved* beliefs—knowledge that is more subjective in nature? My suggestion is that we tie rationality to the latter. The reason is as follows: most individuals are born into an already well-defined and ‘mapped out’ physical, cultural, social, and religious life-world that has been established over a long period of history—a life-world that is then uncritically and unreflectively internalized via their processes of socialization and accepted as ‘*the Real*’ understanding of the world. In the words of Schütz:

Man is born into a world that existed before his birth, and this world is from the outset not merely a physical but also a sociocultural one ... [This] social world into which man is born and within which he has to find his bearings is experienced by him as a tight-knit web of social relationships, of systems of signs and symbols with their particular meaning structure, of institutionalized forms of social organization, of systems of status and prestige, etc. The meaning of all these elements of the social world in all its diversity and stratification, as well as the pattern of its texture itself, is by those living within it just taken for granted.²⁸

Only a fraction of most people’s knowledge originates from their own experience, with the major portion coming as their social heritage

from parents and teachers; in other words, socially derived. Since most people unquestioningly take for granted most of the knowledge that is passed down to them through their respective cultural, religious, and social institutions, it can be described as socially shared and socially approved knowledge. This is why phenomenologists and constructivists such as Husserl and Schütz can claim that the life-world in which people generally live is not a ‘real’ but rather a socially derived one. And yet, despite the fact that most cultural life-worlds can be perceived ‘from the outside’ as being socially-constructed phenomena, they are reified by ‘those on the inside’ and taken for granted as independent realities; indeed, it is on the basis of these socially derived life-worlds that individuals form and are *expected* to form their lives. Schütz puts it as follows: ‘It is entirely irrelevant for a description of a world taken for granted by a particular society whether the socially approved and derived knowledge is indeed true knowledge. All elements of such knowledge ... if *believed* to be true are real components of the “definition of the situation” by the members of the group.’²⁹

The idea that what is *believed* to be true has a practical impact on the world is not new; perhaps its most pregnant formulation can be found in the so-called Thomas theorem: ‘If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.’³⁰ Given this, it appears that the only thing that can be asked of persons who are attempting to rationally decide upon life-goals and finding out how to reach them is to take the socially approved knowledge of their time and place—their subjective beliefs and knowledge—into reflective consideration.

This discussion, of course, has implications relative to our earlier discussion about how to make choices in the area of religion—how we

should relate to our own and other people's religious beliefs as well as how we should relate to and behave towards the adherents of different religious traditions. Among other things, it indicates that we should reject the extremely influential Enlightenment theory of justification known as *evidentialism*, which holds that our 'reasons' for adhering to a belief should be solely based upon hard, objective, scientific evidence, meaning that this is the preferred criterion for the rational holding of a belief.³¹ In keeping with William James and others, I will argue instead for what we can call *presumptivism*, a version of 'presumed innocent until proven guilty', the opinion that it is justified or rational to hold some beliefs until we are faced with counter-evidence or reasonable reasons for doubting those beliefs. It is, in other words, rational to adhere to any reasonably coherent and consistent world view, religious or otherwise, and to hold and act upon the beliefs that 'are included in and follow from' that world view, so long as we are not faced with specific and reasonable reasons to doubt the truth of those beliefs.


One of the reasons for preferring *presumptivism* over and above *evidentialism* is economic. I have argued that *causes*³² rather than *reasons*³³ are responsible for most of the 'content' of our pattern of interpretation and thus for the way we constitute our life-world. I have also argued that we receive the bulk of this 'content' during our primary socialization, before we are old enough to question and reflect upon it. To the extent that these assumptions are true, it is also true that even if we eventually become aware of this state of affairs, few of us have the time, mental energy, and capacity to sceptically view and criticize each and every one of our beliefs about the universe, God, life, and so forth. With the possible exception of a few professional philosophers, evidentialism taken seriously would be a recipe for social suicide!³⁴

This is not to say that good reasons and evidence are unimportant to presumptivism; it is only to point out that presumptivism accepts reasons and evidence other than 'truth' and 'falseness' in a natural-scientific, correspondence-theoretical sense. Presumptivism, in other words, leaves the door open for 'practical' or 'pragmatic' reasons and evidence of various kinds. It accepts that it can be relevant and rational to include, moral, psychological, religious, social, and political considerations and reasons when, for example, deciding how we, in a religiously plural situation, should relate to the beliefs, adherents, of our own as well as other religious traditions.

One reason for this acceptance is my belief, as sketched above, that being religious is less about holding the right or true cognitive beliefs about the universe than it is about getting practical help in living one's life and dealing with hard existential situations and problems like sorrow, suffering, guilt, death, and meaninglessness. According to this, apart from considering the truth, probability, or reasonableness of their cognitive beliefs, it is rational for religious persons to consider the ability of their religion or religiosity to guide them through the concrete practical, moral, and existential difficulties that they are bound to encounter in their lives. This, I believe, is one reason that religious people often put more trust in religious rituals and leaders, religious elites or virtuosos, than in epistemic arguments and truth claims. They seem to be of the opinion that their religion's rationality or irrationality is not primarily connected to the correctness of its ideas, the truths of its formal theoretical statements of propositional beliefs, and its ability to argue for these truths, but rather to their 'practical usefulness' in helping them live their lives, especially in terms of coping with life's difficulties. This is also why important personages in

respective traditions such as, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad, and the stories of how they lived their lives, play such an important role in terms of why a particular tradition is chosen and how it is constructed.

What relevance does all this have for our ability to answer our initial question about how a religious person ought to relate to the beliefs, confessions, and actions of those that adhere to other religious traditions? As already indicated, a model of rationality like the presumptivistic one offers guidance regarding how we ought to think when attempting to choose between the six or seven alternatives for what it is to 'take responsibility for one's faith' in a religiously plural situation. The model, in other words, does not provide a specific substantive answer, but only guides our thinking when we, in our specific time, place, and situation, attempt to arrive at such an answer.

To end on a more personal note: presumptivism, as presented here, has as its philosophical basis the kind of life-world relativism that Schütz seems to be arguing for—an epistemological, not an ontological kind of relativism. According to this view, all arguments and justifications are made—and *have to be made*—from within the framework of one or another life-world and thus cannot be grounded in any 'absolutely objective' position. As human beings, we simply do not have access to any *life-world-independent* position to '*view from nowhere*' by which to compare the truth-value of various life-worlds. From this it follows that the best we can do is to try to think as rationally as we can about our problem from within our own life-world while remaining aware of the existence of many other life-worlds. By doing so we will likely end up with some version of the alternative, where we could consider all religious traditions, including one's own, to be equally true. 

Notes and References

16. More precisely and not surprisingly, a hotly debated topic among the *Ulama* and others within the Muslim world concerns the matter of which of the components of various traditions are to be considered Islamic.
17. From the point of view of Religious Studies there is no essence or definitive meaning of the term 'religion'. As such, all attempts to find and define the 'essence' of a specific religious tradition are doomed from the start. All searches for an essence, or a definitive, overarching definition of 'religion' or 'Christianity', 'Islam', or 'Hinduism' only end up missing the specific historical location of each terminological usage. There is no 'view from nowhere'—no Archimedean point outside of history—from which to determine a fixed and universal meaning for terms like 'religion' and 'Islam'.
18. This, of course, opens up a can of worms that I can peep into but not sort out here. For a detailed discussion of this matter see Å Sander and C Cavallin, 'Hinduism Meets the Global World: the "Easternization" of the West?' in *The Changing World Religion Map*, ed. S Brunn (Munich: Springer, 2012).
19. A complication, of course, is that different religious traditions consider different 'dimensions' of a tradition to be of different importance for living a correct life according to the tradition. Christians, for example, generally place more emphasis on the cognitive faith aspects, than do some other religions, for whom the behavioural aspects, rites and rituals, regulations regarding food, dress, the sexes, and so on, are more important. It is observations of this sort that have inclined many to talk about Christianity as a primarily *orthodox* tradition and some other religions as primarily *orthopraxic* traditions.
20. The intended as well as unintended functions of religion on the individual, micro, macro, group, meso, and societal levels, and the evaluation of these functions, is another of those issues that has been discussed in numerous books and articles by sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and theologians and that I, therefore, can only touch upon here.

21. This, of course, does not mean that a religious tradition or religiosity cannot also fulfil a large number of other positive as well as negative functions for individuals, groups, and societies.
22. As I said, I am aware that religions have many other functions on the macro, sociological; meso, socio-psychological, and micro, psychological levels. Psychologists and sociologists of various sorts have made the list of such functions very long. In this paper, however, I will only deal with the above-mentioned function, which is fulfilled not only by religions but by other 'ideological systems' as well—something that is important to note.
23. From this, of course, it follows that I see religions in primarily practical terms. Their primary function is not to answer questions such as 'what should I believe', but rather to answer questions such as 'how should I live my life', and for many also 'how shall we organize our human society'.
24. This, I believe, is one of the things behind Voltaire's famous statement: 'If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.' This is also in line with my own and many others' belief that *religiosity* is a fundamental aspect of human nature—or the human condition. Thus while *religious expression* may vary according to time, place, and circumstance, to be human is to be *homo religious*: 'however much the context has changed, the basic functions religion plays in human life are essentially the same' (A Greeley, *The Persistence of Religion* (London: SCM, 1973), 16). In keeping with this understanding, Berger has noted in *The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview* that 'the religious impulse has been a perennial feature of humanity ... It would require something close to a mutation of the species to extinguish this impulse for good.' Protagonists of rational choice theory as well as thinkers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, William James, Mircea Eliade, Paul Tillich, Eduard Spranger, James B Pratt, Rudolf Otto, Erich Fromm, Rollo May, and Viktor E Frankl also hold Berger's opinion that human beings are 'incurably religious'. Most adherents of the so-called *attribution theory* also hold this view.
25. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss how this might fit with what at first sight appears to be, for example, an idealistic monistic tradition such as Advaita Vedanta.
26. A fairly clear example of this structure can be found in the *Dhammachakkappavattana Sutta*, Buddha's first sermon at Sarnath. Aristotle is on the same track in his *Nicomachean Ethics*.
27. The difficulty of any general discussion of rationality is aggravated by the fact that the term 'rationality' tends to be used differently in different disciplines, including specialized discussions within disciplines like philosophy, theology, economics, sociology, psychology, and political science.
28. A Schütz, *Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 229.
29. A Schütz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 348.
30. W I Thomas, *The Children in America: Behavioral Problems and Programs* (New York: Knopf, 1928), 571–2.
31. As should be clear from other parts of this paper, the fact that I here focus on *belief*—the conative or cognitive aspect of religion—should not be interpreted as a claim that this is *the only* or even *the most* important aspect of religion. It is, however, an important component since religion or religiosity, like all other forms of human behaviour, presupposes implicitly or explicitly held beliefs about the universe, which should also be clear from other parts of this paper.
32. Above all, that we happen to have been born at a particular time and place and socialized into the world view and life-world of that specific time and place.
33. Meaning that we have arrived at our beliefs through *our own* experiences and by some rational, scientific method.
34. A similar opinion is expressed by R MacIntyre and D W Smith in 'Epistemological crises, dramatic narrative, and the philosophy of science', *The Monist*, 60 (1977), 462: 'To say to oneself or to someone else "Doubt all your beliefs here and now" ... is an invitation not to philosophy but to mental breakdown, or rather to philosophy as a means of mental breakdown'.

Eternal Words

Swami Adbhutananda

Compiled by Swami Siddhananda; translated by Swami Sarvadevananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

WHAT IS THE USE of living at Kashi? The body is in Kashi, but the mind is resting on his children and family in Calcutta. Someone said he will keep his mother at Kashi. The Master said, 'That is not proper. Those who cannot adjust in the family or those who have trouble—they only want to send their mother to Kashi.' The Master knew that there was some trouble in that man's family and that he could not get along with his mother. That is why the Master said that.

Mr A told Pramadas Mitra about Swamiji. Thereafter, Swamiji met him. He used to take good care of Swamiji and say, 'Everything is matching with the scriptures—you are a true monk.' There arose a great clamour—a great monk has come at the house of Pramadas Mitra! Many people used to come to see him; the pundits used to come to debate with him. One day, Swamiji was going to take a bath and a pundit came and said, 'Please debate with me.' Annoyed, Swamiji said, 'Come, I'll give it to you in writing that I have been defeated by you. Will that be enough?' Had Pramadas Mitra lived to see it, he would have been extremely pleased that Swamiji had become so famous.

The general public cannot understand Girish Babu's nature. In the public eye, his life is impure, confusing. It will bring harm to the one who wants to follow him. The Master used to say, 'Girish had more than one hundred and twenty-five percent of faith.' Often, I could not sleep at all for four or five days. As soon as he

saw my eyes, Girish Babu understood this. He would call me, make me sit, and chit-chat with me. Listening to that, I would fall asleep. Then I would get four or five hours of sleep with ease. He used to call me a monk. Reading Girish Babu's books, many would ask him, 'Sir, I cannot understand this passage. Please tell me what the inner meaning is.' Girish Babu responded, 'I also can't understand it. I only wrote it. It is just a fiction born of my imagination.'

It is very difficult to conduct business. What business can one, who is unable to work hard, accomplish? Is it enough to just start a business? One should know how to conduct it. One should know things such as declining prices, rising prices, availability at a reduced price, where the best quality is available, and how much information one must keep. Moreover, one should work very hard. Can one conduct business if one is too conscious of honour and dishonour? One should throw all such things away. It is necessary in business to have great patience, intelligence, and the power to understand the nature of people. One must have to keep trustworthy workers as there is cash to be handled. It is very difficult for anyone to give up attachment to money.

The Master used to ask Rakhal Maharaj when he would return from home, 'Go, first drink three sips of Ganges water and then come to me. That is because you ate the food of the worldly minded people for many days!'

Can anyone who has drunk the syrup of

rock-candy ever desire to drink the juice of molasses again? Those who had the company of the Master and saw his pure life—can they ever be deluded by cheap imitations like these? Those who have not seen a pure life nor ever got the chance to associate with such illumined souls may be fooled by such pretence. Moreover, those feigned attitudes cannot be maintained for long. If one comes face to face with such pure souls, all those frauds will be revealed.

Listen to a story. A tiger entered into a herd of sheep wearing a sheepskin. The purpose was to avoid the shepherd's notice so that he would be unaware that a tiger had entered his herd. Being in the sheep herd, he tried to stay very innocent for a long time like a sheep, but could not in any way keep his ferocious nature in check. As soon as the shepherd became a little unmindful, he instantly cast off the sheep's costume and ran away taking one of the sheep with him. Often in this way, the tiger would steal and devour the sheep. One day, in the same way, that tiger entered into the herd of another, more intelligent shepherd. After all, it was a tiger. Its gestures and its movements were totally different. Inside the sheepskin, he was thinking, 'When will I get the chance to kill a sheep?' What good is it to try to make an external show of being an innocent sheep? Can it keep its ferocious nature in check? By watching his attitude and movements, it can be easily understood that he is not a sheep. As soon as he saw him, the intelligent shepherd understood that this is not a sheep. Then he started making a hullabaloo and the tiger ran away. Exactly in the same manner, one who is not a monk, not a pure soul, cannot pretend for long. For sure, some day or other, his real nature will come out. That is why I say, don't be a phony. Be as you are. Match your interior and exterior.

The householders cannot restrain themselves when they are afflicted with diseases,

bereavement, or mental restlessness. They become depressed. The reason for this is that they place greater trust in all of these momentary objects. But the monks are able to control themselves because they do not place even an iota of trust in any of these. Moreover, they understand that all such things are just the Lord's play. Therefore, they do not become overwhelmed. This is the distinction between a monk and a householder.

One must obey the king's power. If one disrespects one whom God has made a king and bestowed so much power upon, one will have to suffer. This is a manifestation of his special power. All manifestations are under him. This is very true. That is why I tell you not to dishonour the king's power. If you disobey, you will suffer the consequences.

There are all types of people: good, bad, and mediocre. Mixing with one and all is not good. Therefore, one should only associate with people after getting to know them. This is the dictate of the scriptures. In life, one gets cheated so much because of one's lack of power to recognize a person. Only after analysing in this way as much as possible should one associate with others. That way, there will be less chance of being cheated.

God realization is not possible for one who remains always absorbed in deliberating over what is edible and inedible. Such disputation is not the primary goal. God realization alone is primary. Only by eating onion or meat, does everything become impure? If one does spiritual practice, even after eating onion and meat, one will attain the goal. And one who takes vegetarian food yet does no spiritual practices will indeed attain nothing. Jesus Christ used to eat meat, our Master used to eat fish, even Buddha ate meat, but did it cause them to fall? Edible food in contrast to inedible food does nothing special regarding

spiritual development nor causes one's downfall. The mind is certainly the primary thing. One who does spiritual practice will surely succeed. It matters little what food one eats. Of course, I am not saying that by eating rajasic food the rajas quality is not increased. It surely increases a little. But for one whose mind is sattvik, whatever he eats, will verily become sattvik. The real message is that it is not good to cause any injury. Moreover, it is good to eat such food which does not create any obstacles on the spiritual path.

I have no doubt about the greatness of Nityagopal and Vijay Goswami. The Master instructed both of them to give initiation. Being fearful, Nityagopal was not agreeing. Observing that, the Master said, 'Don't you feel pain seeing me? I am dying because of continuous talking. You give spiritual instructions. Have no fear at all. If any mistake happens, it will be mine.' He told Goswami, 'You belong to the lineage of Advaita Goswami. There will be no harm if you give initiation.' Thereafter, following the Master's words, both of them started giving initiation. All these conversations took place in front of me. The Master said, 'Nityagopal is in the state of a paramahansa.' The Master told Ram Babu, 'Don't give him any food which has been eaten by anyone else.'

As one is born, one will have to suffer. There is no escape. Maya alone brings more suffering because the person with whom one becomes attached is not immortal. As soon as he dies, there will be suffering. Moreover, if there is attachment to this very body, it will surely bring suffering. Disease, bereavement, death, desire, suffering—all these are associated with the body as long as it lives. No one can escape their clutches. Even the incarnations and great souls had no escape. Anyone who is embodied is surely under the jurisdiction of all of these. But one who has been

able to renounce attachment to the body, though he may suffer, it nevertheless cannot overwhelm him. This is the only difference.

One does not become Shiva by merely saying, 'Shivoham! Shivoham!—I am Shiva! I am Shiva!' Only by receiving the power of that Shiva, one becomes Shiva-maya, absorbed in Shiva consciousness. Can one become Hara-Parvati merely by dressing themselves as Bhairava-Bhairavi? That is certainly not such a simple affair. One is filled with lust, anger, and jealousy. Yet one says, 'Shivoham!' See what a fraud! Wandering around dressed like Bhairava-Bhairavi and learning the art of cheating and defrauding others, can one become Shiva? Do spiritual practices—if you want to do it. Why such mischief in the name of religion?

Remaining unmarried, do your work and keep remembering and contemplating on God. It is not good for everyone to eat food collected by begging. Those who are genuinely capable of doing meditation and devotional practices can eat the food obtained by begging. To those who cannot do devotional practices, the alms will bring a great harm instead of benefits.

What can a servant offer to his master to please him? But this much is true: the servant can please the master by rendering him service and care. Becoming happy, the master can let the servant know that he is pleased by offering him some tips.

Everyone loves a person of special qualities. Tell me who will love a person who has no talent? But the great souls, giving instruction with love, can transform an unskilled person into a person of excellence. Oh my child, can an unskilled person ever become proficient if he is despised? One should be loved. One should be given a proper education. Then even one who is bereft of talent can become extraordinary. Swamiji used to say, 'Education cannot be

imparted by hating or by disparagingly avoiding others. Love, love, only through love is it possible to give the proper education.'

If a knower of God loves someone, no bondage comes. How can delusion come there? The reason for this is that the mind stays fixed on God. That which is delusion is indeed bondage. One who loves God loves others also because God dwells in them. No delusion can arise where such an attitude exists.

After taking bath, eat a little consecrated food. If one eats consecrated food, the mind and the body become pure.

Whether or not you believe in the Ramayana and Mahabharata—Dhruva, Prahlada, Arjuna, Sri Krishna are all undoubtedly real. One must follow them. They certainly lived in and benefited the world.

One day I went to Vijay Goswami. He was then in Calcutta. He made me sit close to him and took great care of me. I saw that he had not forgotten us. As is the father, so is his son. His father was so famous, yet there was not the least trace of ego in his son. As soon as I arrived, Yogajivan would feel great joy. Afterwards, he would say, 'Father, Swamiji has come.' With extreme delight, Goswami would get up from his own seat and make me sit there. Oh dear, can everyone get God-vision? Goswami had genuine vision of God. He was fully saturated with what he had attained. How much more greater can a person be?

One time I may throw you out; another time I may pick you up. Being a monk, should I think of you people all of the time? That is why saying, 'I throw you out,' I completely discard even the thought of you all from my mind. Similarly, whenever I wish, I can draw you back saying, 'I am picking you up.'

Oh my child, what sort of worship is this which you have done? You have collected all

shabby items from the market! If you offer a cloth, it is not more than four yards; and the variety is very coarse and cheap. If you offer fruits, you offer the worst fruits available in the market. When you offer sweets, they are all stale and foul! My child, what type of worship is this? If you are offering it to the Divine Mother, why do you not offer Mother the choicest items? How can you offer to God those things which you hate to eat yourself? If, owing to lack of money, you cannot afford to purchase any good items, at least offer to God an item which you use yourself. It is better not to perform any worship at all than to disrespectfully worship by offering such bad things.

He mumbles and cannot express his words clearly. Why do you consider him low just because he has such a low manifestation of intellect? Is he less fortunate than you all? Receiving the grace of Holy Mother at Calcutta, he went to Gaya. He offered oblations to his parents. Thereafter, he went to Kashi and came back associating with the monks. Is this an ordinary matter? Is he less fortunate?

It is one hundred times better to die from starvation while chanting the name of the Lord than to live eating the very best food without chanting his name.

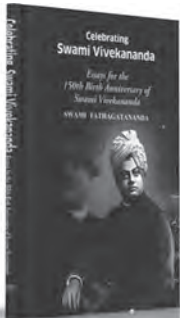
Shukadev himself narrated the Bhagavata to Parikshit. Oh my dear, will a king's attachment be so slight? You have that small home; how much attachment you have for it! The king has his attachment to such a vast kingdom. What a great attachment that is! To cut asunder that very attachment or maya, the great soul Shukadev who had conquered his senses, had to come himself and chant the Bhagavata to him. The Bhagavata is very difficult to understand. It will bring a negative understanding and foster doubt if one is not pure in heart.

Hari Om Tat Sat!



REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



Celebrating Swami Vivekananda: Essays for the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda Swami Tathagatananda.

Vedanta Society of New York, 34 West
71st Street, New York, NY 10023 USA.
2013. viii+184 pp. ₹ 80.

The author of this book, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, has to his credit several books on Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda. Celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda organised by the Ramakrishna Mission, concluded this year and this book has been published in this context. This book has six chapters besides two appendices apart from the preface, which briefly discusses the concept behind the book.

The first chapter 'Swami Vivekananda, Mystic Par Excellence' has delved deep into the mystical life of Swamiji right from his birth to early adolescence and youth. The Oxford dictionary's meaning of the word 'mysticism' has been provided at the beginning of the chapter so as to clear misgivings in the minds of the reader about the word. It mentions the incident of a cobra entering the room when Swamiji was in deep meditation with a few of his young friends. His mystical experiences with his master as well as at Belur Math, at Kashmir, Almora, and other places have been vividly mentioned. All this brings to the fore the inherent greatness which Swamiji possessed right from his childhood.

The second chapter 'Swamiji's Impact on the World's Parliament of Religions' discusses the number of delegates present and the number of papers read. The change in India's image through Swamiji's capable representation to the west of a religion of universality, unflinching clarity, self-renunciation, and of the human intellect's purest conceivable sentiments is described.

The third chapter 'Glimpses of Swamiji's Heroic Struggle' depicts his lifelong struggles for the establishment of the Ramakrishna Order of monks as well as for the propagation of Sanatana Dharma. Swamiji's experiences of extreme poverty after his father's early demise as also the various temptations which came his way to waver him from his faith in the existence of God and the path of goodness and honesty, along with the accounts of hardships he encountered at Baranagore, as a wandering monk, at America, financially, intellectually, and socially, helps us gain an insight into Swamiji's unending struggles in achieving his divine mission.

The fourth chapter 'Swami Vivekananda, Incarnation of Shakti: Apostle of Strength and Manliness' shows Swamiji as a child of Shakti and also that God is the source of infinite courage, strength, virility, energy, power, and fortitude. By realizing God within through spiritual discipline, human being attains real strength and immortality. Swamiji's assurance of the infinite capacity within us waiting to be harnessed through strength of character is emphasized in this chapter.

The fifth chapter 'Value of Brahmacharya' explains the ancient Indian views on its exalted virtues as vividly displayed by Swamiji. The goal of brahmacharya and its spiritual energy, and the role of appropriate diet as purifying nourishment is underscored to achieve the benefits of brahmacharya as a means of God-realization.

The sixth chapter 'Swami Vivekananda's Special Relationship with Ajit Singh—A Brief Study' discusses Swamiji's brotherly relationship with Ajit Singh, the Maharaja of Khetri. It reveals the various ways in which the Raja helped Swamiji in his mission in India as well as abroad. His contributions maintained Swamiji's family during Swamiji's long absence from India. Also revealed here is the fact that the monastic name of Swami Vivekananda, which Swamiji took before leaving for the US, was at the instance of the Raja of Khetri.

Of the two appendices, the first one titled 'Japa, Instrument of Love for God's Name' mentions *japa* as a means of self-realisation. Some sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu have been given to bring out the efficacy of the sacred method of *japa* as a sure instrument of God realization as espoused in the Vedic religion. The second appendix titled 'A Little-known Fact about Revered Sashi Maharaj' is about Swami Ramakrishnananda, a monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, who started the Ramakrishna Math in Madras.

This well printed book is definitely bound to attract all who are eager to know more about Swamiji and make every reader feel inspired.

Santosh Kumar Sharma
Kharagpur, West Bengal



The Classic Wisdom of Srimad Bhagavatam

Swami Gurudasananda

Swami Gurudasananda, 'Sreyas', Plot No 53, IV Street, Kulandai Ammal Nagar, Thanjavur 613 007. 2013. 163 pp. ₹ 60.

The sacred scripture of Bhagavata can be conceived of as a magic window that provides one with a cathartic view of the realm of the spirit, of the majesty of transcendental truths, and of the marvel of towering devotion. The book under review gives us an exciting peek into the selective scenic spots of transcendental wisdom.

Besides the preface and the introduction, the book has fifteen chapters. The brief but profound opening hymn of meditation that starts with the immortal words of the second aphorism of Badarayana's *Brahma Sutra*—'*janmadyasya yatah*', a delight for probing pedants and pedagogues, forms the theme of the first chapter titled 'Mangalacharan'. The second chapter briefly deals with Kunti's unique prayer for endless sufferings—an enigmatic prayer that is an index of Kunti's ecstatic devotion. The third one touches upon the *Chatusslokhi Bhagavata*—a quartet of verses that is held to be the nucleus of this great scripture. The fourth titled 'Suka's advice to Parikshit' treats of the decisive rendezvous between Sage Shuka

and King Parikshit, who had undertaken a fast unto death, and the sage's illuminating discourse to the king in quest of beatitude. The fifth chapter 'The Teachings of the Lord Incarnate as Rishabha' analyses the lofty teachings of Rishabha who was possessed of extreme dispassion. The sixth chapter, 'Bharata to Rahuguna on Brahma Vidyabhyasa' contains the sublime instructions of Jadabharata, the spiritual titan, to King Rahuguna, the egoistic king turned spiritual aspirant. The teachings of Narada and Angirasa to Chitraketu, and Kapilopadesha to Devahuti form the subject-matter of the seventh and eighth chapters respectively. The ninth proves the efficacy of the divine name as an infallible means of liberation through the story of Ajamila. Chapters ten and eleven narrate the stories of the Bhagavata's spiritual twins—Prahlada and Dhruva respectively, and underscore the glory of self-effacing devotion as an unfailing path to emancipation. Prahlada's famous declaration, addressed to his wicked father, of the practice of the nine-limbed devotion as the best way of redemption and his profound discourse on lofty spiritual themes to his *asura* classmates are briefly touched upon in chapter eleven. Chapter twelve, 'Hamsavatara Jnanopadesa' summarises the discourse of the Lord in the form of a *hamsa*, swan, to Brahma, and his mind-born four sons, Sanaka and others. While chapter thirteen is devoted to a brief exposition of Purusha Sukta, the final chapter covers the marathon sermon of the Lord to Uddhava, popularly known as Uddhava Gita.

The chapter on Purusha Sukta, though outside the ambit of the Bhagavata, its inclusion is perhaps because of its affinity to the Bhagavata in being a peerless panegyric of Bhagavan Vishnu. The author gives a few Sanskrit verses, with Roman transliteration, from the relevant chapters and expounds their meanings briefly. The book is like a small appetiser meant for whetting the appetite of spiritual gourmets intent on gobbling up the sumptuous feast of the legendary Bhagavata.

The book succeeds in giving a foretaste of the copious draughts of philosophical and literary felicity with which the immortal Bhagavata is brimming.

N Hariharan
Madurai

REPORTS



Commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda

Memorial Opera House, Valparaiso, Indiana, USA

The following centres held various programmes to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. **Delhi:** Five three-day workshops in Bhopal, Delhi, and Kolkata between 30 July and 30 August 2014 in which 314 teachers were trained for conducting value education programmes in schools. The English version of the puppet show on Swami Vivekananda was inaugurated on 31 July at the Ashrama by Sri Shripad Yesso Naik, Union Minister for Culture and Tourism. Nearly 700 people watched the show. **Gadadhar Ashrama, Kolkata:** A special programme comprising lectures and devotional music on 22 August which was attended by about 400 people. **Hyderabad:** A three-day all-India youth convention from 8 to 10 August in which nearly 1,000 youths from 13 states participated. **Madurai:** Puppet shows on Swamiji at 8 places in and around Madurai from 19 to 22 August which were watched by about 5,000 people. **Ponnampet:** Seven value education programmes for

Puppet Show on Swami Vivekananda



school and college students, lecturers, and journalists between 12 and 17 August. In all, about 1,400 people participated in these programmes. **Swamiji's Ancestral House, Kolkata:** Three public meetings on 24, 28, and 29 July which were attended by altogether 1,150 people. On the centre's initiative, five public meetings were held at different places in and around Kolkata on 22, 27, and 28 July, and 6 and 7 August. In all, about 2,250 people attended the programmes.

News of Branch Centres

Ramakrishna Vijayam, the Tamil journal of the Order published from **Ramakrishna Math, Chennai**, conducted a short story competition and awarded prizes to eighteen winners in a function held at Vivekanandar Illam in Chennai on 29 August. The topics included religious harmony, spirituality, cultural heritage, and patriotism. Many notable personalities of Tamil literature, press, and the media were present. **Ramakrishna Saradashrama, Ponnampet** conducted a summer camp for children from 27 April to 4 May, in which 120 boys took part. The newly constructed hostel building, Vivekananda Vidyarthi Nilayam, was inaugurated and a statue of Mother Saraswati Devi was installed on the Sitanagaram campus of **Ramakrishna Mission, Vijayawada** on 15 August. 'Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment' has awarded Best Eco Club Award for the year 2013 to the higher secondary school of

Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kozhikode.

The award carries a sum of one lakh rupees. The new emergency block of **Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindaban** hospital was inaugurated on 30 August. **Ramakrishna Math, Lucknow** provided Vitamin-A capsules to 3,154 underprivileged children of 6 schools in Lucknow district and free glasses to 122 children with refractory errors in the month of August.

On the initiative of **Chicago (USA)** centre, a plaque was installed at the Memorial Opera House, Valparaiso, Indiana, USA, on 16 August where Swamiji had delivered a lecture on 'Religions and Customs in India' on 27 February 1894. The plaque bears the likeness of Swamiji and a short description of the event.

Relief

Drought Relief · Rajasthan: From 28 July to 5 August, **Khetri** centre distributed 32,000 l of drinking water among 1,320 families facing acute water scarcity.

Flood Relief · Odisha: Some areas of Bhadrak district were flooded owing to heavy rainfall and consequent overflow of rivers. Many mud houses were destroyed and the standing crops inundated. Our **Kothar** centre served cooked food (rice and dalma) and distributed 400 kg biscuits among 1,660 affected families of 9 villages in Kothar and Kashimpur gram-panchayats from 6 to 10 August. **Puri Mission** centre distributed 11,600 kg

wheat flour, 2,000 kg chira (rice flakes), 2,940 kg chattu (gram flour) and 5,792 packets of biscuits among 5,379 flood-affected families of 38 villages in Ganeswarpur, Rahangagorada, and Nuakhola-mara areas of Puri district from 10 to 26 August.

Uttar Pradesh: In the wake of heavy floods in Balarampur district, our **Lucknow** centre distributed 10,100 food packets (puri, curry, and pickles) among an equal number of flood-affected people and 1,105 saris, 783 dhotis, and 449 lungis among 733 families belonging to 7 villages of Harraiya Satgharwa block in the district from 20 to 30 August. The centre also provided medical assistance to 3,350 flood-stricken patients belonging to 17 villages of Harriya, Satgharwa, and Gainsaria blocks in the Balarampur district during the same period. **West Bengal:** As heavy rainfall caused severe inundation in a major portion of South 24 Parganas district, our **Naora** centre served cooked food (khichri) to 580 affected families of 6 villages in the district from 20 to 24 August.

Distress Relief · The following centres distributed various items, shown against their names, to needy people: (a) **Agartala:** 404 mosquito-nets among malaria-affected families in Kanchanpur sub-division of North Tripura district on 20 and 21 August. (b) **Chandipur:** 100 saris from 20 to 27 July. (c) **Ichapur:** 10 kg rice, 1 kg chira (rice flakes), 3 kg flour, 200 saris, and 200 dhotis from 1 to 31 July. (d) **Nagpur:** 1,207 sets of school uniforms, 4,060 notebooks, 1,500 pens, 135 geometry boxes, and 65 school bags to poor students of 27 schools from 9 July to 12 August. (e) **Ponnampet:** 9,043 notebooks, 1,406 pens, 880 pencils, 263 scales, 880 erasers, and 90 slates among 2,049 poor students of 17 schools and 3 colleges.

Rehabilitation · Dinajpur (Bangladesh) centre constructed a school building comprising two classrooms and one office-cum-library room in Karnai area of Sadar sub-district in Dinajpur town to cater to the educational needs of poor children of the area. The building was handed to the school authorities on 21 May.

PR

Distress Relief by Chandipur Centre



Correction · March 2014, p. 261: read 'Santosh Kumar Sharma, Kharagpur' instead of 'Sudesh Garg, Chandigarh'.



**Sri Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama,
Allahabad, invites you to**

Serve the Pilgrims at the Kumbha Mela

Every year Ramakrishna Math, Allahabad, arranges a Magh Mela camp in the month of Magh (January–February) for about one month starting from 15 January till Maghi purnima. For this annual feature, we spend a minimum of forty lakh rupees every year, which may vary according to inflation.

In light of the above, Ramakrishna Math, Allahabad requests both devotees and admirers to contribute liberally to the Vijnanananda Endowment Fund.

1. Kumbha Mela :

- a. Rupees one lakh or more: Three members of a family will receive a one day reservation in the camp during the Kumbha Mela. (One hundred endowment-donors will receive this opportunity on a first come, first served basis.)
- b. Rupees two lakh or more: Three members of a family will receive two days' reservation in the camp during the Kumbha Mela. (One hundred endowment-donors will receive this opportunity on a first come, first served basis.)
- c. Rupees ten lakh or more: Three members of a family will receive five days' reservation in the camp during the Kumbha Mela. (Fifty endowment-donors will receive this opportunity on a first come, first served basis.)
- d. Rupees thirty lakh or more: Five members of a family will receive ten days' reservation in the camp during the Kumbha Mela. (Fifty endowment-donors will receive this opportunity on a first come, first served basis for two consecutive Kumbha Melas.)

2. Magh Mela :

- a. Rupees ten thousand or more: One member of a family will receive an one day reservation in the camp during the Magh Mela. (One hundred endowment-donors will receive this opportunity on a first come, first served basis.)
- b. Rupees twenty thousand or more: Three members of a family will receive a one day reservation in the camp during the Magh Mela. (One hundred endowment-donors will receive this opportunity on a first come, first served basis.)
- c. Rupees fifty thousand or more: Three members of the family will receive five days' reservation in the camp during the Magh Mela. (One hundred endowment-donors will receive this opportunity on a first come, first served basis.)
- d. Rupees one lakh or more: Five members of the family will receive ten days reservation in the camp during the Magh Mela. (Fifty endowment-donor will receive this opportunity on a first come, first served basis.)

Any of these endowment-donor members who want to stay during the Kalpavas period will have to deposit an additional rupees thirty thousand per member by the month of November. (Only fifty donors will be allowed to stay on a first come, first served basis.)

Please contact our office and register your name for the Endowment fund with your contact address. Then we will send a form to be completed by you and to be sent back with the pledged amount. Please note that donations to the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama are exempt from Income Tax under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Swami Sarvabhutananda
Secretary



For more details, contact:

Sri Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama,
Vijnanananda Marg, Muthiganj, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh 211003
Email: rkmsald@gmail.com Phone: 0532-2413369/2413286



BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Daridra Narayan Seva: Serving the uneducated, illiterate women and people affected by flood/draught(s), irrespective of caste, creed and religion by regularly distributing dhooti-sarees (about 800 per year), blankets (about 700 per year), food packets to the suffering villagers, and 15 to 20 bicycles every year to poor high school girls.

Education Seva: Serving the indigent tribal children, who are first generation learners, by running three rural primary schools, and six free coaching centers in the remote village areas. In addition, our Ashrama administers a Higher Secondary school, a Primary and a Kindergarten school for the indigent children of Maldatown. Finally, we also provide a hostel for 70 students. either at nominal, reduced or free of cost.

Medical Seva: Serving the indigents who dwell in the slums, and do not have the means for proper medical care, by operating both alleopathic and homeopathic dispensaries, providing mobile medical service for the poor and conducting 10 medical camps every week. T.B. patients are given free medicines and injections. Every year approximately 30,000 people receive free medical care in our units.

Dear Friends,

Your contributions are the sole sustenance for the above seva. I humbly request you to donate generously. We hope to create a corpus fund of 2 crores rupees, the interest of which will help us to meet the above expenses. In your donation, kindly mention that it is for the '*corpus fund for the philanthropic activities of our Ashrama*'. All donations for this noble cause are tax exempt per regulations. A/c payee Cheque/ Draft may be drawn in favour of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Malda. On-line donations may be made to our account in the following numbers of Malda Ashrama (to be made to our account in the following numbers of Malda Ashrama (to be followed by a letter). State Bank of India of Malda - 11175363270, United Bank of India 0233010034363.

Swami Parasharananda
Secretary



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA

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English Editor : Swami Satyamayananda & Shri Tirthankar Dasgupta



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